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A
Book of POEMS
BY

JOHN W. CHADWICK

491

Harvard Divinity School



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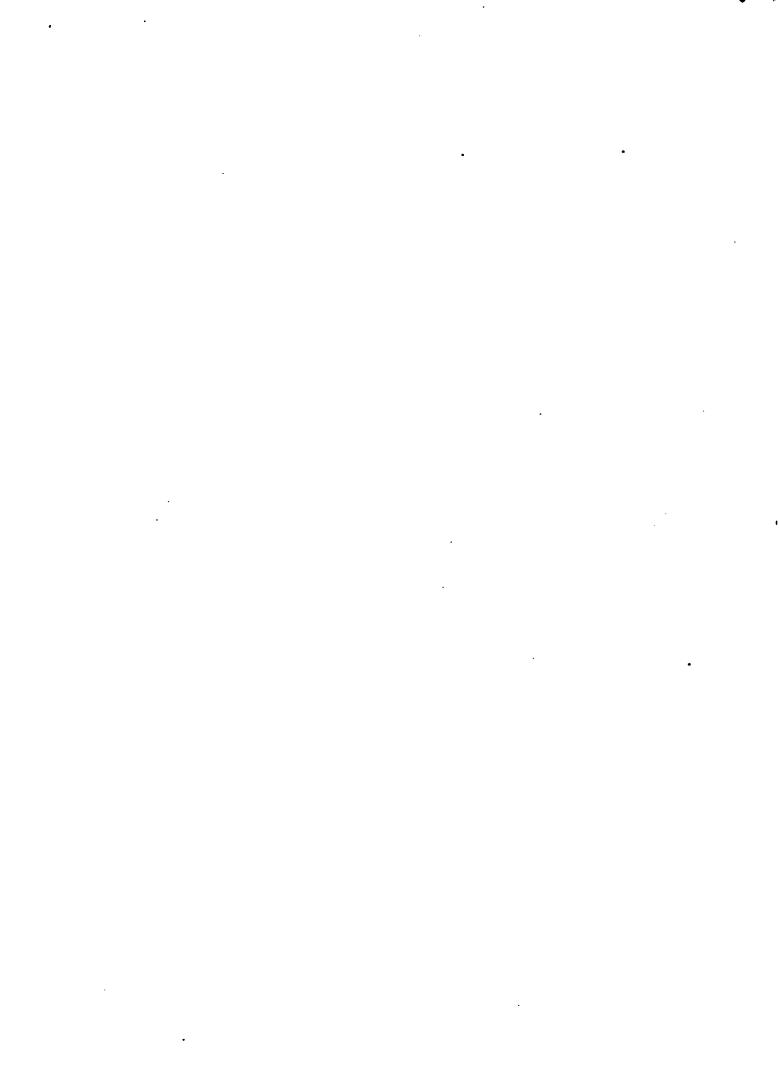
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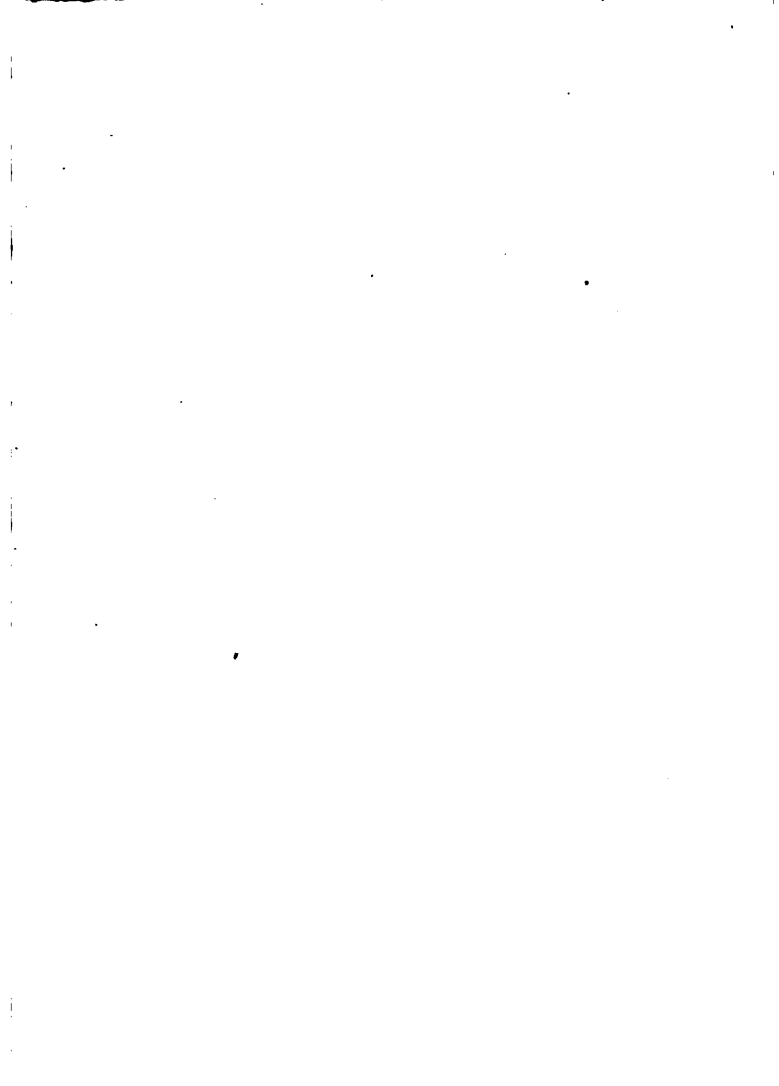


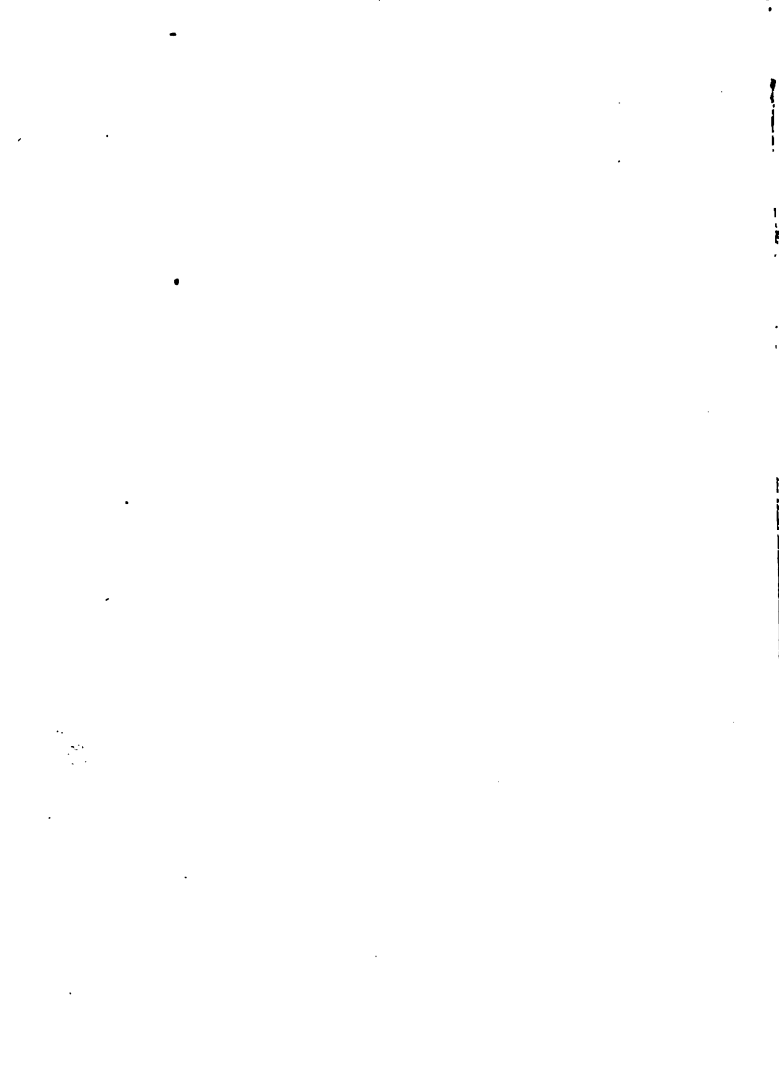
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London







A
BOOK OF POEMS

BY
JOHN W. CHADWICK.



BOSTON:
ROBERTS BROTHERS.
1876.

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Cambridge:

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*To one all honesty and truth,
To one all tenderness and love,—
Father and Mother, — and to one
Who dwells with happy saints above ; —
Thou, Sister, who wast more to me
Than lips of mine can ever say ;
Dispeller of my darkest night,
Dear prophet of my better day ;
To one who calls me Brother still,
Most kind to me and all of mine,
Strong to uphold in time of need
Though tremulous as the clinging vine ;
To one who full of years and grace
Still called me by my earliest name,
Whose simple praise I counted more
Than any hollow voice of fame ;
To one, of all my friends most dear,
A spirit brave and wise and good,
Whose love has made me more a man,
And made God's love more understood ;
And two, — of such the kingdom is, —
Whose winsome prattle helps me more
Than aught that I have ever gleaned
From Bible-text or scholar's lore ;
But most of all, to one whose hand
Lies close in mine where'er I roam ;
My sternest critic, safest guide,
The dear wife-angel of my home.*



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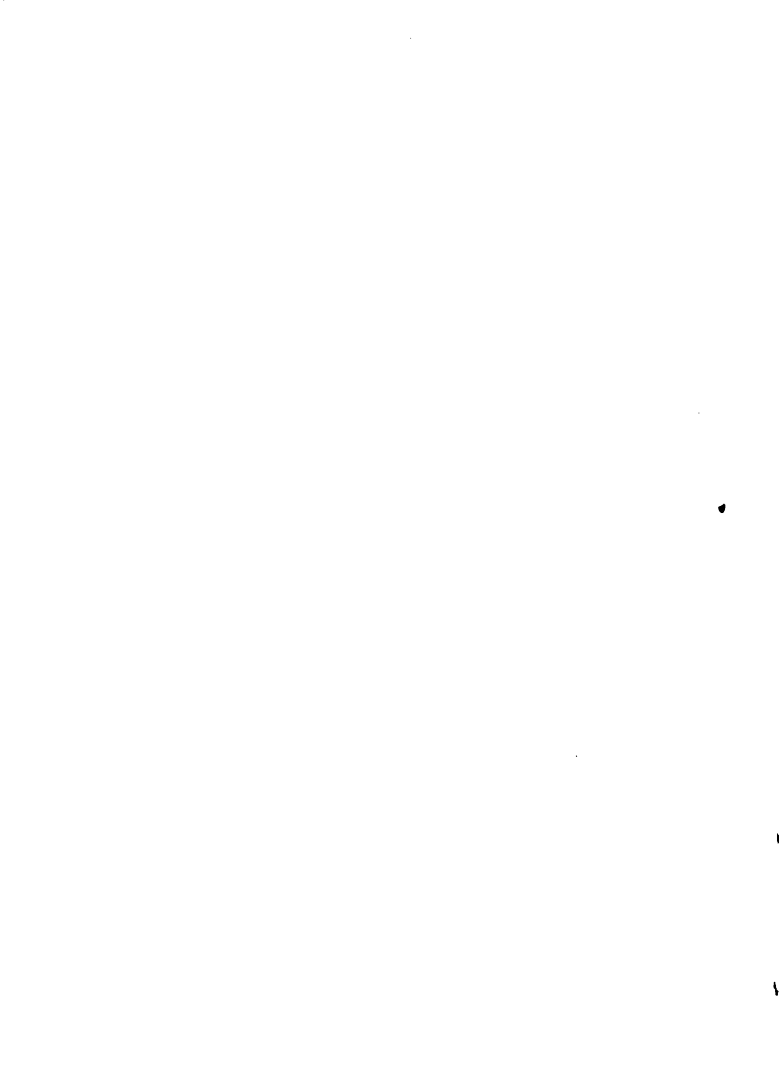
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POEMS OF NATURE.



POEMS OF NATURE.



MY BARNACLES.



NOT those whose life is hid with God
In the unfathomed sea ;
Not those which gleam so milky-white
Under my dory's lee,

As o'er her side I softly lean,
And watch the life below, —
The strange, fair things which there abide,
And those which come and go.

Nor call I mine the crowds that cling
To many a venturous keel, —
A mimic world, whose tiny folk
Through ocean spaces steal.

Mine are the little creatures left
By the retreating sea,
Who long for it to come again,
So masterful and free.

It goes : the hot sun scorches them,
And lovers' careless feet
Tread them to death, as if no life
But theirs were passing sweet.

It comes : it woos, it kisses them ;
It drenches them with love ;
It is a presence everywhere, —
Around, beneath, above.

And these are mine by lover's right ;
And, when the tide is low,
Down to its edge with scooping hands
Or cup of shell I go,

And dip the briny waters up,
And bear them back to give
To these wee things that long for them
As dying men to live.

How eagerly their shells dispart
To take the moisture in !
And do I hear a tiny laugh, —
The faintest, merriest din ?

What think they of the sudden draught ?
That 'tis the coming sea ?
A little wave sent on before
The mighty company ?

And when they know it is not that,
Do they reproach the hand
Which brings the broken promise up
From the wave-beaten strand ?

Believe it not : they know the step
Of the advancing sea,
Better than maidens know the feet
That come so stealthily.

They take, with thanks, the human help,
And still with patience wait
For the vast love to come and fill
The void it doth create.

So wait our souls on Thee, O God !
Their longing is from Thee :
All human help must ever hint
At Thy sufficiency.

Come as the ocean comes, to give
Its energy divine ;
Fold us in Thy encircling arms,
And make us wholly Thine.

MARBLEHEAD, August, 1871.

WHITSUNTIDE.



UT from the city's flaming heart,
Miles but a dozen away,
I know of a mountain's secret shrine,
Where lately I went to pray.

But my prayer was not for the smallest boon :
It was nothing but thanks and joy,
As I roamed through the scented woodland paths,
With the heart of a happy boy ;

As I touched the tips of the maple-boughs,
Shaded with softest brown ;
As the thistle showed me her armature,
Frosted with silvery down.

And, oh ! the gleam of the birches' stems,
And the new green of the pines,
And the hemlock fringes sweeping low,
Till they touched the creeping vines !

And every bank was studded thick
With wild flowers sweet and rare ;
While the ferns seemed made of spirit-stuff,
They were so slight and fair.

And the city was gleaming far away
Through a veil of thin white mist,
And billows of green rolled in between,
Till the land and the water kissed.

It was only a dozen miles away,
As flies the laden bee,
But to my free thought 'twas a hundred leagues,
And more, to the shining sea.

Could it be, I thought, in the world with this
There was dust and heat and glare ?
Could it be there was sorrow and hate and sin,
And terror and wild despair ?

Alas ! it could ; but for this one day
I would live as if it could not ;
I would dream that the world, from end to end,
Was only this one dear spot.

All should be sweet and cool and pure ;
All should be gay and free ;
All men be as gentle, all women as true
As the man and the woman with me.

They had lived with the birds and the flowers so long
They seemed to have learned their speech :
Softer it fell on my drowsy sense
Than the rain on a sandy beach.

They could call the trees and the flowers by name ;
They could tell me of all their times ;
And their talk was a poem that needed not
The help of a poet's rhymes.

Where was the service that day, think you ?
Down in the valley below,
Where the sweet-toned bell of the village church
Was swinging to and fro ;

Or was it there, on the mountain-side,
Where the Spirit, with two or three,
Was saying softly, in various speech,
“ Let the little ones come unto me ? ”

1872.



BY THE SEA-SHORE.



HE curvèd strand
Of cool, gray sand
Lies like a sickle by the sea ;
The tide is low,
But soft and slow
Is creeping higher up the lea.

The beach-birds fleet,
With twinkling feet,
Hurry and scurry to and fro,
And sip, and chat
Of this and that
Which you and I may never know.

The runlets gay,
That haste away
To meet each snowy-bosomed crest,
Enrich the shore
With fleeting store
Of art-defying arabesque.

BY THE SEA-SHORE.

Each higher wave
Doth touch and lave
A million pebbles smooth and bright ;
Straightway they grow
A beauteous show,
With hues unknown before bedight.

High up the beach,
Far out of reach
Of common tides that ebb and flow,
The drift-wood's heap
Doth record keep
Of storms that perished long ago.

Nor storms alone :
I hear the moan
Of voices choked by dashing brine,
When sunken rock
Or tempest shock
Crushed the good vessel's oaken spine.

Where ends the beach,
The cliffs upreach
Their lichen-wrinkled foreheads old ;
And here I rest,
While all the west
Grows brighter with the sunset's gold.

Far out at sea,
The ships that flee
Along the dim horizon's line
Their sails unfold
Like cloth of gold,
Transfigured by that light divine.

A calm more deep,
As 'twere asleep,
Upon the weary ocean falls ;
So low it sighs,
Its murmur dies,
While shrill the boding cricket calls.

O peace and rest !
Upon the breast
Of God himself I seem to lean,
No break, no bar
Of sun or star :
Just God and I, with naught between.

Oh, when some day
In vain I pray
For days like this to come again,
I shall rejoice
With heart and voice
That one such day has ever been.

NIRVANA.



LONG the scholar's glowing page
 I read the Orient thinker's dream
 Of things that are not what they seem,
 Of mystic chant and Soma's rage.

The sunlight flooding all the room
 To me again was Indra's smile,
 And on the hearth the blazing pile
 For Agni's sake did fret and fume.

Yet most I read of who aspire
 To win Nirvana's deep repose, —
 Of that long way the spirit goes
 To reach the absence of desire.

But through the music of my book
 Another music smote my ear, —
 A tinkle silver-sweet and clear, —
 The babble of the mountain-brook.

“ Oh ! leave,” it said, “ your ancient seers ;
Come out into the woods with me ;
Behold an older mystery
Than Buddhist’s hope or Brahman’s fears ! ”

The voice so sweet I could but hear.
I sallied forth, with staff in hand,
Where, mile on mile, the mountain land
Was radiant with the dying year.

I heard the startled partridge whirr,
And crinkling through the tender grass
I saw the striped adder pass,
Where dropped the chestnut’s prickly burr.

I saw the miracle of life
From death upspringing evermore ;
The fallen tree a forest bore
Of tiny forms with beauty rife.

I gathered mosses rare and sweet,
The acorn in its carven cup ;
’ Mid heaps of leaves, wind-gathered up,
I trod with half-remorseful feet.

The maple’s blush I made my own,
The sumac’s crimson splendor bold,
The poplar’s hue of paly gold,
The faded chestnut, crisp and brown.

I climbed the mountain's shaggy crest,
Where masses huge of molten rock,
After long years of pain and shock,
Fern-covered, from their wanderings rest.

Far, far below the valley spread
Its rich, roof-dotted, wide expanse ;
And further still the sunlight's dance
The amorous river gayly led.

But, still, with all I heard or saw
There mingled thoughts of that old time,
And that enchanted Eastern clime
Where Buddha gave his mystic law, —

Till, wearied with the lengthy way,
I found a spot where all was still,
Just as the sun behind the hill
Was making bright the parting day.

On either side the mountains stood,
Masses of color rich and warm ;
And over them, in giant form,
The rosy moon serenely glowed.

My heart was full as it could hold ;
The Buddha's paradise was mine ;
My mountain-nook its inmost shrine,
The fretted sky its roof of gold.

Nirvana's peace my soul had found, —
 Absence complete of all desire, —
 While the great moon was mounting higher
 And deeper quiet breathed around.

CATSKILLS, October, 1872.

ALL FOR EACH.



SIT on the rocky headland
 That juts from the queer old town,
 Where the lichen-covered ledges
 To meet the tides run down.

There are voices of children ringing
 Through the still morning air,
 And a lusty cock is crowing,
 And, down on the water there,

A single rower is fretting
 The sea with a gentle sound,
 And the breath of an ended summer
 Is whispering around.

The grasses seem to hear it,
 And shudder as if with pain ;
 It is full of a sad foreboding
 Of the Jotuns' icy reign.

The dories sway at their moorings,
As they catch the fitful breeze ;
And they sidle against each other,
As if themselves to please.

But 'tis only me they are pleasing, —
The picture is all for me, —
And the gray clouds sailing over,
And the sunlight on the sea ;

And the white sails of the vessels,
That gleam in the morning sun ;
And the sounds of far-off labor,
And the shadows cold and dun ;

And the butterfly, knowing surely
That summer is ended for him ;
And the bee, that must wander widely
To fill his sacs to the brim.

And mine is the insect's rapture,
And mine is the sea-gull's pride,
As he sees his whiteness mirrored
Far down in the gleaming tide.

And all the ships in the offing,
Outward and inward bound,
Are mine, and with my ventures
Go sailing the world around.

And these are but one day's riches,
The gatherings of an hour ;
But every day is mighty,
Each night is a night of power.

For all of the brown old planet,
All of the deep blue sky,
All that the ear can harken,
All that can fill the eye,

Is mine by the law of Beauty ;
And men may give or withhold,
When He who is God of Beauty
Her secret to us has told.

MARBLEHEAD, September, 1873.



RAIN AFTER DROUGHT.



FEW short hours ago, and all the land
Lay as in fever, faint and parched with
drought ;
And so had lain, while many a weary day
Dragged the long horror of its minutes out.

The juiceless fruits fell from the dusty trees ;
The farmer doubted if the Lord was good,
As, sad, he watched the labor of his hands
Made useless by the Day-god's fiery mood.

The hot streets sickened in the burning glare ;
The roadsides lost the glory of their green ;
No second growth sprang up to glad the eye,
Where once the mower with his scythe had been.

A few short hours ago ! And now, behold,
Freshness and beauty gleam on every side ;
The earth has drunk its fill, and all about
The amber pools are stretching far and wide.

A million drops are flashing in the sun ;
The springs far down the upper wonder know ;
The farmer laughs, and little cares how fast
Through his torn hat the cooling streamlets flow.

And all the fields and pastures seem to say,
With joyous smile that I shall ne'er forget,
And all the flowers and trees in chorus join,
" We knew 'twould come ! He never failed us yet."

God of my life, as God of all beside,
This lovely wonder, which Thy hand hath wrought,
Quickens in thought the mercies manifold
Which Thy great love into my soul hath brought.

For I have lain, full oft, as hot and dry
As ever earth in summer's fiercest hour ;
And the long days, slow creeping over me,
Brought me no tokens of Thy gracious power.

Then, at Thy word, down fell Thy spirit-rain ;
I felt its coolness all my being through ;
Made fresh and clean and joyous every whit,
I heard the whisper, " I make all things new."

But mine, alas ! was not the holy faith
The parched earth felt through all her thirsty hours :
I was in fear that never more again
Should I be quickened by the heavenly powers.

So shall it be no more ; but though I lie
 For many days as one Thou dost forget,
 Recalling this glad hour, my heart shall say,
 " I know 'twill come ! He never failed me yet."

MARBLEHEAD, August, 1870.

SEA-SORCERY.



HEERILY blew the soft mid-summer wind,
 And morn's first freshness had not left the
 sky,

As our small craft shot past the harbor-buoy
 And left the light-house far upon the lee,
 And stood right out into the glistening bay ;
 Leaving behind the sad and sullen roar
 Of the great waves that broke upon the rocks,
 Tossing the rock-weed madly to and fro ;
 Leaving behind the voices clear and sweet
 Of happy children playing on the beach,
 And the one ancient, immemorial man
 Whose dory rocked amid the boiling surf,
 While he, as ever, sat with eyes cast down,
 Wondering what luck his lines would bring that day.
 Dimmer and dimmer grew the distant shore ;
 Down dropped the spires below the violet line
 Where sea and sky were married into one,
 And still we sailed.

And more and more there fell
Upon our spirits such a subtle charm,
So weird a spell of sea-wrought sorcery,
That all things seemed unto our spirits strange.
Strange seemed the sky above, and strange the sea,
And strange the vessels fitting to and fro
Across the bay. Strange seemed we each to each
And to ourselves ; and, when our voices smote
The stillness, half they seemed like voices heard
In lives long gone, or lives that were to be.
Little we spoke, and less of words our own ;
But now and then some poet's music heard
In that old time before we sailed away,
It might have been a hundred years ago.
Dream-like grew all the past, until it seemed
To be no past of ours.

But when the sun
Began to linger towards the western verge,
We turned our prow and bade him be our guide ;
Yet more in doubt than faith that we should find
The land from which we once had sailed away, —
Ay, whether such a land there was at all,
Save as some baseless phantom of our brains.
And when again we heard the roaring surf,
And saw the old, familiar, storm-bleached crags,
And the long curve of pebbly beach beyond,
The wonder grew, till it was keen as pain,
Whether indeed we sailed away that morn,

Or in some dim gray morning of the world ;
Whether some few brief hours had flitted by
Between the morning and the evening stars,
Or generations had arrived and gone,
And states had fallen 'mid the crash of arms,
And justice grown more ample on the earth.
There sat the ancient, immemorial man,
Tending his line amid the boiling surf,
And still the charm was not dissolvèd quite :
So long had he been there, it seemed not strange
That he should sit a thousand years or more,
Paying no heed to aught that passed him by.
At length our moorings reached, our anchor dropped,
Amid a crowd we stood upon the shore, —
A crowd whose faces looked a trifle strange ;
Till from among them came a little child,
And put her hand in mine and lifted up her face
For kisses. Then the charm was snapped ;
And I went homeward, glad to be restored
To the firm earth and its familiar ways.

1876.



THE GOLDEN-ROBIN'S NEST.



HE golden-robin came to build his nest
High in the elm-tree's ever-nodding crest ;
All the long day, upon his task intent,
Backward and forward busily he went,

Gathering from far and near the tiny shreds
That birdies weave for little birdies' beds ;
Now bits of grass, now bits of vagrant string,
And now some queerer, dearer sort of thing.

For on the lawn, where he was wont to come
In search of stuff to build his pretty home,
We dropped one day a lock of golden hair
Which our wee darling easily could spare ;

And close beside it tenderly we placed
A lock that had the stooping shoulders graced
Of her old grandsire ; it was white as snow,
Or cherry-trees when they are all ablow.

Then throve the golden-robin's work apace ;
Hundreds of times he sought the lucky place
Where sure, he thought, in his bird-fashion dim,
Wondrous provision had been made for him.

Both locks, the white and golden, disappeared ;
The nest was finished, and the brood was reared ;
And then there came a pleasant summer's day
When the last golden-robin flew away.

Ere long, in triumph, from its leafy height,
We bore the nest so wonderfully dight,
And saw how prettily the white and gold
Made warp and woof of many a gleaming fold.

But when again the golden-robins came,
Cleaving the orchards with their breasts aflame,
Grandsire's white locks and baby's golden head
Were lying low, both in one grassy bed.

And so more dear than ever is the nest
Ta'en from the elm-tree's ever nodding crest.
Little the golden-robin thought how rare
A thing he wrought of white and golden hair !

TO THE SEA.



THOU that art so nearly infinite !

Lashing thy shores that drip with tangled
weed !

Listening to thy deep voice, another speaks,
And tells me of the Infinite indeed.

Thy hollow caves are voiceful with His name,
Whose love is deeper than thy deepest place,
Whose inspirations are more strong and free
Than the great storms that oversweep thy face.

Oh, never time was yet, since first He made
The purple pillars of thy farthest bound,
That thou didst cease from murmuring to the shore,
And wooing it with sweet and holy sound.

And He that is the shoreless Infinite,
And I that am an island on His breast,
Live in such wise that evermore he woos
My soul and fills it with his great unrest.

And as I hear thy voice, may He my prayer,
That I may listen while His music beats,
And, like the sea-shell, murmur back again
That which once heard it evermore repeats.

So that my life may rounded be, and smooth,
As are these pebbles on thy shining strand ;
So that my soul, as do thy countless waves,
May haste to do whate'er He may command.

1865.



A SEPTEMBER GALE.



LOSE as a limpet clinging to the rocks,
Battered and drenched by the remorseless
gale,

I watch the wild commotion it has made,
Through the dim twilight peering eagerly.
The waves are running higher than the masts
Of the small craft they drive so swift along,
Driven themselves by the loud-cracking whip
Of the fierce wind, and chasing each the next
With foam, like hair, blown wild before the blast.
That flying fringe of foam from every wave
Is like the breath of restless, fiery steeds,
As from their quivering nostrils it is driven
'Gainst the hot flanks that steam just on before,
When all the field is torn with flying hoofs,
And all the air is full of cheering cries,
A moment ere the hosts in battle join.
The waves, like steeds, are pawing at the rocks,
And snorting loud and roaring as in pain ;
While, like a streamer long, the flying spray

Tugs at the harbor-buoy, and like a dog
In leash, or tiger chained, at every pier
Some vessel strains and frets and chafes in vain.
And there are cries of quick and sharp command,
Thick-spiced with oaths, borne shoreward on the wind
From schooners' decks as they drift hopelessly,
Dragging their anchors at their cables' length,
To dash, at last, upon the pitiless rocks
And strew their tackle on the whelming sea.
And, as I watch the elemental rage,
My heart is wild with joy and ecstasy.

Now all is dark, and now a sudden flash
Of lightning from an ebon mass of cloud
Turns every crest to gold ; to gold the masts
Of every vessel hurrying to her doom ;
To gold the light-house at the harbor's mouth,
Sending its steadfast warning o'er the bay ;
And by that flash I see, not far away,
A woman's face, as pale as palest death,
And haggard, too, with speechless agony.
My joy is done. O woman, Heaven keep
Thy husband 'mid the smiting of the seas,
And bring him safely to thine arms again,
And to the mute caresses of his babes !

RHODODENDRONS.

"God is a good worker, but he likes to be helped."



YOU great beauties, who can ever know
How passing fair you are to look upon!
I, 'mid your glories slowly wandering on,
And almost faint with joy that you can glow
With hues so rich and varied, row on row,
A corner in my heart for him alone
Must keep, who hath in your fair petals shown
Such things to us as never had been so
But for his loving patience, sweet and long;
Ay, and no less to the clear eye of God,
Which never yet in all His endless years,
Till you out-bloomed in colors pure as song,
Had seen such fairness springing from the sod
As this which fills our eyes with happy tears.

PHILADELPHIA, 1876.

CROW'S NEST.



BUILDING our beacon fire, we spread our feast
On the bare cliff high up against the sky ;
Eastward a few lone clouds went sailing by,
As more and more the sunset glow increased,
And every sound of bird and leaf had ceased ;
Far down below, we could the stream espy,
Seeming at rest all motionless to lie ;
And life from every burden seemed released.
Range beyond range, we saw the wooded heights ;
And far away, backed against paly gold,
Their rightful lords — unspeakable delights ! —
Their purple splendor sturdily uphold,
While, climbing slow, the moon and eve's first star
Led every thought to heights more cool and far.

WHITE MOUNTAINS, 1875.

WAKEFUL.



THOU that bringest sweet surcease from care,
Long have I sought thy drowsy spell in vain ;
Yet less, that yonder hoarsely-shrieking train
Doth to invade these sacred precincts dare,
Than that a thousand images most fair
Are thronging all the spaces of my brain,—
Visions of beauty without fleck or stain,
Born of the day's delight beyond compare.
For once I chide thee not that thou dost stay.
Better than thee these memories vague and sweet
Of joys that filled the heart of all the day,
Made yet more dear because they were so fleet,
And thanks more still than faintliest whispered prayer
To Him whose love hath made the world so fair.

WHITE MOUNTAINS, 1875.

LEAVE-TAKING.



HIS is the trysting-place ; from day to day,
 Without so much as willing to be here,
 The laughing hours have seen me at thy side,
 Because thou art so beautiful and dear.

But this day is the last. To-morrow morn
 Back to the city's mournful streets I hie,
 There to be cheated by the art of man
 Of God's inheritance of air and sky.

But oh ! for once thou art too beautiful !
 Thy beauty makes it agony to part.
 Sea, thou art cruel, so, on this last day,
 To try the weakness of thy lover's heart.

To-day, methinks, thou need'st not so have smiled,
 Like some proud beauty, full of high disdain ;
 Oh ! hide thy fairness with some misty veil,
 And lighten so the burden of my pain.

Nay, do not hearken, for there is no need ;
This sudden rush of tears will do as well :
One more last look, and then thy voice shall sound
As sounds, far off, some solemn vesper-bell.

But something of thy freshness in my heart
Will linger still, and permanently bless ;
And I shall hear, 'mid things that come and go,
The murmur of thy everlastingness.

SEPTEMBER, 1873.

"HIS COMPASSIONS FAIL NOT."



HE farmer chides the tardy spring,
The sun withhold his wonted ray,
The days are dull and cold and gray,
No shadow doth the maple fling.

From snow-clad peaks and icy main,
The north wind cometh wet and chill,
And evermore the clouds distil
The hoarded treasure of the rain.

But still, O miracle of good !
The crocus springs, the violets peep,
The straggling vines begin to creep,
The dandelion gilds the sod.

The rain may fall in constant showers,
The south-wind tarry on its way ;
But through the night and through the day
Advance the summer's fragrant hours.

And though the north-wind force him back,
'T he song-bird hurries from the South,
With summer's music in his mouth,
And studs with songs his airy track.

What then, my soul, if thou must know
Thy days of darkness, gloom and cold,
If joy its ruddy beams withhold,
And grief compels my tears to flow ?

And what if, when with bended form
I praise the gods for sorrows past,
There ever comes a fiercer blast,
And darker ruin of the storm ?

As tarry not the flowers of June
For all the ill the heavens can do,
And, to their inmost natures true,
The birds rejoice in sweetest tune :

So, Father, shall it be with me ;
And whether winds blow foul or fair,
Through want and woe, and toil and care,
Still will I struggle up to Thee ;

That, though my winter days be long,
 And brighter skies refuse to come,
 My life no less may sweetly bloom,
 And none the less be full of song.

BROOKLYN, 1868.

SEA-BORN VENUS.



WONDER not men fabled as they did,
 In that old rapture of Hellenic days,
 Of Venus as the daughter of the Sea,
 From its white foam upspringing, full of
 grace.

For I have watched thy beauty hour by hour,
 Lying at thy dear side all hushed and still,
 Bidding thee work on me thy secret spells,
 And with thy fulness all my being fill.

“ Ay, sea-born beauty, but how sea-born love ? ”
 I hear the doubter question and confess.
 But who, still young, has wandered by thy side,
 The old Hellenic riddle well may guess.

Thou art the mother of all tender thoughts,
 Of longings and of infinite desires ;
 The yearning of thy never-ending plaint
 A kindred yearning in our souls inspires.

When youths and maidens walk thy shining strand,
And listen to thy harmonies and hymns,
There is a mist that is not of the sea
That gathers fast and all their vision 'dims.

Their speech is silence, but it tells a tale
Of that which makes the merry world go round ;
Thou dost interpret for them every thought
Which, sudden, they in their fresh hearts have found.

And so thou art the lover's go-between ;
So love that knows itself is born of thee ;
And hearts already pledged become more fond
While listening to thy murmurings, O Sea !

Ay, love is born of thee, and deeper love
Than ever flows to any human goal, —
Love of that Spirit who in every tide
Hints at the deeper currents of the soul.

We love thee best, since thou art type of Him :
Thou freshening earth as she through space is hurled,
And He, the ocean of the universe,
Freshening for aye the courses of the world.

“WHAT DO I KNOW ?”

Motto on Montaigne's seal.



PON this heaven-kissing hill,
On this mid-summer day of days,
That sad old question shoulders in
Among my thoughts of prayer and praise,

What do I know? Not much, alas !
Of all the breadth and depth and height
That presses upon soul and sense
From day to day, from night to night.

And yet I know the light is sweet,
And pleasant 'tis to see the sun, —
What time he climbs the eastern hills,
And when his course is nearly done.

I know the look of wind-blown grass,
The quiet rustle of the corn,
The lusty song the thrasher sings
To usher in the glowing morn.

I know to what a merry tune
Yon river ripples on its way,
And how, along its leafy brink
The drooping branches softly sway.

I know the springs that trickle down
Through many a rod of brush and fern,
Divinely cool, nor Zeus himself
Drank better drink from Hebe's urn.

I know what fine enchantments lurk
In clouds that trail their shadows dun
O'er hill and vale, or lie at ease
Along the west at set of sun.

I know the night is calm and cool,
And welcome when the day is spent ;
And when it fills the sky with stars,
Fills all my soul with sweet content.

But in the worlds of thought and love
Yet more and better things I know
Than this mid-summer day of days,
For all its treasures, has to show.

I know that many friends are kind,
That many hearts are fond and true ;
I know — but hush ! I may not tell
The half I know, Montaigne, to you.

Wherefore, O skeptic, go and try
 Your question in some other ear ;
 I know enough to keep my heart
 Brimful of joy from year to year.

CHESTERFIELD, MASS., July, 1875.

WORKS AND DAYS.



O break the gently undulating sea
 With oars it seems to fondle lovingly,
 And watch the eddies as they circle back
 Along my winding track.

To rest upon my oars, and, as I glide
 With wind and current, in the cooling tide
 To dip my hands, while something seems to say
 Within me, "Let us pray."

As near as may be to the fringed shore
 To keep my boat, and lean her gunnel o'er,
 Watching the many-colored floor, untrod
 Save by the feet of God.

His ways are in the deep ; His sunlight, too,
 Pierces its deeps of shadow through and through,
 And touches many a wonder that abides
 Below the lowest tides.

How beautiful the sunlight on the sea,
When waves by millions twinkle as in glee !
But 'tis the sunlight *in* the sea whose gleam
To me doth fairest seem.

It glorifies the pebbles with its rays ;
It turns gray sand to perfect chrysoprase ;
Plays with the amber tresses of the rocks
As with a maiden's locks.

Anon in some sequestered nook I lie,
And see the yachts, white-winged, go sailing by,
And feel, whichever quickest onward flies,
Mine is the truest prize.

I watch the race with neither hope nor fear,
Since none than other is to me more dear ;
My prize the perfect beauty of the sight, —
Unselfish, pure delight.

I sit and wonder what the cliffs would say
If they could speak, remembering the day
When first, " Thus far, no farther," it was said ;
" Here thy proud waves be stayed !"

Since then what laughter and what cry and moan
The sea has offered up to them alone !
What suns have kissed, what storms have left their
blight !
What silence of the night !

So wondering, how strange it is and still,
Save where, a mile away, the drogers fill
Their battered dories with the shingly store
Of the long-boarding shore !

That far-off sound is but a gauge that tells
How deep the silence is ; like Sunday bells
Which, ringing, tell the resting village o'er
How still it was before.

These are my works and days : in these I drown
The cares and troubles of the noisy town,
And let it seethe and rumble as it may,
Day after weary day.

But when the summer days are sweetly fled,
And great fall clouds go floating overhead ;
When asters lurk along the pleasant ways
With golden-rod ablaze ;

Then I will back again to faces see
Than all these sights more beautiful to me ;
Where friendliest voices wait for me to hear,
Than all these sounds more dear.

POEMS OF LIFE.

POEMS OF LIFE.



SADNESS AND GLADNESS.



HERE was a glory in my house,
And it is fled ;
There was a baby at my heart,
And it is dead.

And when I sit and think of him,
I am so sad,
'That half it seems that never more
Can I be glad.

If you had known this baby mine,
He was so sweet
You would have gone a journey just
To kiss his feet.

He could not walk a single step,
Nor speak a word ;
But then he was as blithe and gay
As any bird

That ever sat on orchard-bough,
And trilled its song,
Until the listener fancied it
As sweet and strong

As if from lips of angels he
Had heard it flow ;
Such angels as thy hand could paint,
Angelico !

You cannot think how many things
He learned to know
Before the swift, swift angel came,
And bade him go ;

So that my neighbors said of him,
He was so wise
That he was never meant for earth,
But for the skies.

But I would not believe a word
Of what they said ;
Nor will I, even now, although
My boy is dead.

For God would be most wicked, if,
When all the earth
Is in the travail of a new
And heavenly birth,

As often as a little Christ is found
 With human breath,
He, like another Herod, should resolve
 Upon its death.

But should you ask me how it is
 That yours can stay,
Though mine must spread his little wings
 And fly away,

I could but say, that God, who made
 This heart of mine,
Must have intended that its love
 Should be the sign

Of His own love ; and that if He
 Can think it right
To turn my joy to sorrow, and
 My day to night,

I cannot doubt that He will turn,
 In other ways,
My winter darkness to the light
 Of summer days.

I know that God gives nothing to
 Us for a day ;
That what He gives He never cares
 To take away.

And when He comes and seems to make
Our glory less,
It is that, bye-and-bye, we may
The more confess

That He has made it brighter than
It was before, —
A glory shining on and on
For evermore.

And when I sit and think of this,
I am so glad,
That half it seems that never more
Can I be sad.

BROOKLYN, 1865.



TÊTE-À-TÊTE.

I.



BIT of ground, a smell of earth,
 A pleasant murmur in the trees,
 The chirp of birds, an insect's hum,
 And, kneeling on their chubby knees,

Two neighbors' children at their play ;
 Who has not seen a hundred such ?
 A head of gold, a head of brown,
 Bending together till they touch.

II.

A country school-house by the road,
 A spicy scent of woods anear,
 And all the air with summer sounds
 Laden for who may care to hear.

So care not two, a boy and girl,
 Who stay when all the rest are gone,
 Solving a problem deeper far
 Than one they seem intent upon.

Dear hearts, of course they do not know
How near their heads together lean.
The bee that wanders through the room
Has hardly space to go between.

III.

Now darker is the head of brown,
The head of gold is brighter now,
And lines of deeper thought and life
Are written upon either brow.

The sense that thrilled their being through
With nameless longings vast and dim
Has found a voice, has found a name,
And where he goes she follows him.

Again their heads are bending near,
And bending down in silent awe
Above a morsel pure and sweet,
A miracle of love and law.

How often shall their heads be bowed
With joy or grief, with love and pride,
As waxeth strong that feeble life,
Or slowly ebbs its falling tide!

IV.

A seaward hill where lie the dead
In dreamless slumber deep and calm ;
Above their graves the roses bloom,
And all the air is full of balm.

They do not smell the roses sweet ;
They do not see the ships that go
Along the far horizon's edge ;
They do not feel the breezes blow.

Here loving hands have gently laid
The neighbors' children, girl and boy,
And man and wife ; head close to head
They sleep, and know nor pain nor joy.



THE GATE CALLED BEAUTIFUL.

“And they brought a man, lame from his birth, and laid him daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful.”



LAME from his birth ; and who is not as much,
 Though in his body he be stout and strong ;
 And in his mind an athlete for the truth ;
 In conscience, too, a giant against wrong ?

For who that guesses what a man may be,
 In all his powers and graces how divine,
 And then bethinks him of the thing he is, —
 So far below that glory, God, of thine, —

Though he were greatest of the sons of men,
 “Why callest thou me good ?” he still would say ;
 And all the heights already won would point
 To higher peaks along the heavenly way.

Lame from our birth ; and daily we are brought,
 And at the gate called Beautiful are laid :
 Sometimes its wonder makes us free and glad ;
 Sometimes its grandeur makes us half afraid.

The gate called Beautiful ; and yet methinks
No word can name it that begins to tell
How soar its pillars to the highest heavens,
And how their roots take hold on lowest hell.

With what designs its panels are inwrought,
O'ertraced with flowers and hills and shining seas,
And glorified by rise and set of suns,
And Junes of blossom and October trees !

So beautiful, yet never quite the same !
The pictures change with every changing hour ;
Or sweeter things come stealing into view,
Which stronger things had hidden by their power.

There all the stars and systems go their way ;
There shines the moon so tender in her grace ;
And there, than moon or star or sun more fair,
The blessed wonder of the human face.

Faces and faces ! some of children sweet ;
And some of maidens fresh and pure and true ;
And some that lovelier are at evening time
Than any can be while the years are few.

This is the gate called Beautiful ; it swings
To music sweeter than was heard that day
When St. Cecilia, rapt in ecstasy,
Heard through her trance the angelic roundelay.

Music of little children at their play ;
Of mothers hushing them to sleep and dreams ;
Of all the birds that sing in all the trees,
Of all the murmuring of all the streams.

And at this gate, not at wide intervals,
Are we, lame from our birth, laid tenderly,
But daily ; and not one day passes by
And we look not upon this mystery.

Gate of the Temple ? surely it is that !
It opens not into vacuity ;
For all its beauty, it is not so fair
But that a greater beauty there can be.

Thy beauty, O my Father ! All is Thine ;
But there is beauty in Thyself, from whence
The beauty Thou hast made doth ever flow
In streams of never-failing affluence.

Thou art the Temple ! and though I am lame, —
Lame from my birth, and shall be till I die, —
I enter through the gate called Beautiful,
And am alone with Thee, O Thou Most High !

REAL AND IDEAL.



LOOKING athwart the valley's cleft,
Where nestles many a cosey farm
Beside the stream whose music low
For ever keeps its ancient charm,

For one I love, who, young and gay,
Full often wandered by its side,
Floating his wayward fancies down
To the great sea upon its tide, —

Looking through dreamy, half-shut eyes
Across to where the shining mist
Bathed all the woods and uplands dim
With purple and with amethyst,

I said, Why do we linger thus
Where all is sharp and bright and clear?
Seek we the pleasant land beyond,
And taste of its enchantments dear.

Agreed ; and soon our faithful grays
Were plunging down the hill-side steep,
Where over lichen-crinkled walls
The tangled thickets nod and creep ;

And past the spring that trickles down
Through ledges thick with brush and furze,
Where aspens show their silver pomp
And chestnuts drop their prickly burrs ;

And o'er the little rattling bridge
That spans the pebbly, murmurous stream,
And on into the land that seemed
The mystic shadow of a dream.

And what to find? The smell of hay
New-mown, and gleam of mowers' scythes,
And purple milkweed hardly seen
For troops of golden butterflies ;

And many a pleasant upland farm,
And many a sun-browned little maid,
And patient cattle half asleep
In many a maple's plenteous shade ;

All this and more ; but here nor there
One atom of the tender mist
That, from afar, had clothed the land
With purple and with amethyst.

But looking backward to the hills
 Which we had left an hour before,
 Behold the charm we came to seek
 Was there! Down-folded softly o'er

Each dear familiar place it lay, —
 The violet-tinted mystic haze ;
 And there had lain, hour after hour,
 Through the long, sweet, mid-summer days ;

While we, in all its splendor clad,
 In Tyrian dyes right royally,
 Had deemed that we must seek afar
 Its perfect grace and mystery.

CHESTERFIELD, MASS., July 19, 1876.

A VINDICATION.



THOU art not proud because thou art so
 beautiful.

'Tis falsely said. Thou art but glad of heart
 To feel thy glorious beauty is a part
 Of all the beauty that is anywhere,
 On land or sea or in the gleaming air :
 Such gladness is less proud than dutiful.

THE OVER-SOUL.



FLING one day in June, my aimless feet,
 Forbidden, crossed the threshold of that fane
 By grateful Harvard built for her dear slain,
 Whom Freedom counted for her service meet.

Above me rose the glorious sheaf of towers,
 As on the snowy tablets, slow, I read
 The names of all the generous-hearted dead,
 Who were our chivalry's most perfect flowers.

There were the names of men whom all the land
 Hailed as the greatest in those dreadful days ;
 There, too, their names whose only meed of praise
 Was the deep sense of doing God's command.

And one I read, which oft I used to speak
 In loving-wise, as friend doth speak with friend :
 Brave, ardent spirit ! wheresoever tend
 Thy restless feet, thou dost the highest seek.

And, as I gazed, with dimmer sight I saw
 Upon rude stagings high above my head
 The workmen painting words that shall be read
Through countless years of Liberty and Law ;—

Resounding words of that melodious tongue
 Which still doth with the pomp of Virgil swell ;
 But nought of all their meaning could they tell,
Who on the wall their various colors flung.

And some there were who worked in sombre hues,
 While others bravely did illuminate
 With red and gold some word of greater weight ;
But all alike the meaning all did lose.

Behold, I thought, a parable of those
 Whose names are graven on these tablets cold ;
 They did their work, yet little could have told
Of meanings vast which only Heaven knows.

Behold, I thought, a parable of all
 Who do men's work upon this mortal strand ;
 Great meanings which they cannot understand,
They paint and grave on Time's memorial wall.

There are who work in colors dull and cold ;
 There are who work in characters of flame :
 It matters not, the glory is the same ;
For only thus the tale is fitly told,

Which He *can* read who builds all seas above,
 So strong that nothing can destroy or mar,
 In every sun, in every circling star,
 The everlasting temple of His love.

CAMBRIDGE, 1874.

INSIGHT.



WHAT I know best, I know not why I know :
 " Show me the Father," inwardly I cried ;
 And one that walked long since by Jordan's
 side
 Said, " Even I the Father's goodness show."
 I doubt it not ; but as my way I go,
 And ever in his Father's peace abide,
 I ponder well the word that he replied,
 And ask myself, " If so, why is it so ?"
 Why if I do not know by deeper sense
 Than I can fathom with my plummet-thought,
 That God's love must be ever more intense
 Than any love that man has ever wrought ?
Why it must be, in vain I strive to tell :
 I know it is, and know that all is well.

1872.

CARPE DIEM.



SOUL of mine, how few and short the years
Ere thou shalt go the way of all thy kind,
And here no more thy joy or sorrow find
At any fount of happiness or tears !
Yea, and how soon shall all that thee endears
To any heart that beats with love for thee
Be everywhere forgotten utterly,
With all thy loves and joys, and hopes and fears !
But, O my soul, because these things are so,
Be thou not cheated of to-day's delight.
When the night cometh, it may well be night ;
Now it is day. See that no minute's glow
Of all the shining hours unheeded goes ;
No fount of rightful joy by thee untasted flows.

And still another thinks that he
The Christ of the Apocalypse,
Returning out of heaven, shall see,
With vengeance breathing from His lips.

The one true Christ I seek in vain ;
The Church of now, the Bible old,
Are dumb in answer to my pain ;
The Fathers' hearts have long been cold.

But, in his written words, I see
Great Origen his forehead lean
Upon a Christ that cannot be
The Christ that haunted Augustine.

Then speaks my heart within my breast,
Which from the first had made its moan
That I should be so ill at rest,
And feel myself so much alone :

“ Why longer urge thy fruitless search ?
The one true Christ thou shalt not find
Until thou seek him in his Church,
All beautiful, within thy mind.

“ His temple is the human soul :
He dwelleth ever more within ;
The harmonies of heaven roll
For him whose life is free from sin.

“ Be free from foolish hates and fears,
The love of ease, the love of pelf,
And all the Christs of all the years
Shall lead thee nearer to thyself.

“ The highest word that is for thee
Awaits thee in no distant land ;
Thy deepest mood shall ever be
By thee obeyed as God’s command.

“ Not farther off, but farther in, —
Such is the nature of thy quest ;
They heaven find who heaven win,
The one true Christ is in thy breast.”

1867.



GIFTS IN SLEEP.

I.



OUR sweet boy-baby had a gift,
 A home-made rabbit, soft and white ;
 By day, by night, awake, asleep,
 It evermore was his delight.

Beauty and use could not agree,
 It lost its whiteness more and more ;
 It lost its tail, it lost its ears :
 He loved it better than before.

And still the grimy little heap
 He tucked beneath his dainty chin ;
 And still to bed without his pet
 Was sure to brew a dreadful din.

Nightly we found his rosy cheek
 Against his battered darling pressed.
 A vote was passed : when Christmas came,
 He should of it be dispossessed,

And in its place, at dead of night,
Another should be slyly placed,
With coat of down as snowy white
As a wee rabbit ever graced.

The deed was done. Not without tears
We took the dear old pet away,
And wrapped it up and marked it plain,
To keep against some distant day,

When, haply, to some boy of his
He might the frowzy relic show,
For proof that he was true in love
Some five-and-twenty years ago.

Where lay the old we laid the new,
And waited for the Christmas morn,
As wait a hundred million hearts
For the dear time when Christ was born.

It came at length, and baby woke,
To clutch his precious *liebling* fast ;—
It was the same, yet not the same !
Its squalor with the night had passed !

He looked at first with dubious face,
But soon resolved that all was right ;
So cuddled it the livelong day,
And pressed it to his cheek at night.

And then I thought, 'Tis writ "He gives
To His beloved while they sleep ;"
And deeper meanings found me out,
While lay my boy in slumbers deep.

II.

Children of larger growth, God gives
To us His gifts from day to day, —
His gifts of thought, His gifts of will, —
And how we fritter them away !

We soil them like the baby's pet ;
We grovel with them in the mire ;
And then we sleep ; and while we sleep,
Sing heavenly voices, "Come up higher."

New every morn, fresh every eve,
The promise runs, and faileth not ;
When we awake, we are with Him
Whose promises are ne'er forgot.

From weary mind and conscience dim,
Sleep clears the blurring films away ;
We may have erred, we may have sinned,
But life is new with every day.

He giveth His beloved sleep :
Oh, joy to troubled hearts and sore !
And, while they sleep, — oh, deeper joy ! —
He gives them strength to reach that shore
Whence they may never wander more.

1873.

A SONG OF TRUST.



LOVE Divine, of all that is
The sweetest still and best,
Fain would I come and rest to-night
Upon Thy tender breast.

As tired of sin as any child
Was ever tired of play,
When evening's hush has folded in
The noises of the day ;

When just for very weariness
The little one will creep
Into the arms that have no joy
Like holding him in sleep ;

And looking upward to Thy face,
So gentle, sweet and strong
In all its looks for those who love,
So pitiful of wrong,

A SONG OF TRUST.

I pray Thee turn me not away,
For, sinful though I be,
Thou knowest every thing I need
And all my need of Thee.

And yet the spirit in my heart
Says, Wherefore should I pray
That Thou shouldst seek me with Thy love,
Since Thou dost seek always?

And dost not even wait until
I urge my steps to Thee ;
But in the darkness of my life
Art coming still to me.

I pray not, then, because I would ;
I pray because I must ;
There is no meaning in my prayer
But thankfulness and trust.

I would not have Thee otherwise
Than what Thou ever art ;
Be still Thyself, and then I know
We cannot live apart.

But still Thy love will beckon me
And still Thy strength will come,
In many ways to bear me up
And bring me to my home.

And Thou wilt hear the thought I mean,
And not the words I say ;
Wilt hear the thanks among the words
That only seem to pray ;

As if Thou wert not always good,
As if Thy loving care
Could ever miss me in the midst
Of this Thy temple fair.

For, if I ever doubted Thee,
How could I any more !
'This very night my tossing bark
Has reached the happy shore ;

And still, for all my sighs, my heart
Has sung itself to rest,
O Love Divine, most far and near,
Upon Thy tender breast.

1865.



RECOGNITION.

“They shall all know me.”

i.



S closely to my heart this morn
 I held the little child,
 That lately came to me from God,
 So sweet and undefiled, —

Bending above her little face
 As though it were a book,
 In which to know that God is good
 I needed but to look, —

Up to my eyes she turned her own,
 In such a wondrous way,
 That I shall be a happier man
 Henceforward from this day.

For not more plainly, if in words
 She could her meaning tell,
 Could she declare her message sweet,
 “Father, I know you well!”

O recognition more divine
Than lovers' looks of love,
When first they know the will of God
And all His goodness prove !

O recognition more divine
Than words of mine can say !
What have I done, O God, that Thou
Shouldst bless me so alway ?

Into the face of death, to-day,
I could have looked and smiled,
And said, "Come take me, for I've had
A message from my child."

II.

O men and women, if a man,
Because his little child
Has looked for once into his face
And said, or rather smiled,

"O father mine, I know you well !"
Has known so deep a joy,
What think you must be felt in heaven ?
What bliss, without alloy,

Must fill our heavenly Father's heart
When first His children know
That they are born of Him, and more
Like Him must ever grow ?

O recognition sweet enough
For angel lips to sing,
When first this living sacrifice
Into His courts we bring ;

When first, it may be through the tears
That on our eyelids shine,
We dare look up and say to Him,
“ Dear Father, Thou art mine ! ”

And shall we taste a joy so sweet
With children He has given,
And then not do our part to make
Him happy in His heaven ?

JANUARY, 1868.



“WHY THIS WASTE?”



THAT eyes which pierced our inmost being
through ;
That lips which pressed into a single kiss,
It seemed, a whole eternity of bliss ;
That cheeks which mantled with love's rosy hue ;
That feet which wanted nothing else to do
But run upon love's errands, this and this ;
That hands so fair they had not seemed amiss
Reached down by angels through the deeps of blue ;—
That all of these so deep in earth should lie
While season after season passeth by ;
That things which are so sacred and so sweet
The hungry roots of tree and plant should eat !
Oh for one hour to see as Thou dost see,
My God, how great the recompense must be !

THE GREATEST WONDER.



O pleasantly the fleeting days go by,
So much they bring of bliss without alloy,
So much to give my thought and will employ,
Whether upon the fragrant turf I lie,
With face upturned and watch some argosy,
Of white-sailed clouds, freighted with summer joy,
Or track the fancies that, on wings more coy
Than shyest bird's, explore a deeper sky,
Or converse hold with whom I love the best, —
The greatest wonder that my spirit knows
Is — that with so much gone I am so bless'd?
Ah, no ! But from this thought it ever flows :
How could my heart contain its vast delight,
If my lost saints were with me here to-night ?

PEGASUS IN HARNESS.



DEAR, noble friend, it seems almost a wrong
That thou shouldst give thy long laborious
days
To tasks that win no generous meed of praise,
When at thy bidding myriad shapes would throng
About thee, and the world should know ere long
How rare thy power in many gracious ways
To paint the wonder of our heritage
In language sweeter far than poet's song.
But, if thou dost not murmur, why should we?
At least *we* know thee for the man thou art ;
And if thou carest not to take thy part
Of what the world would give so willingly,
Neither dost thou the least temptation feel
To mar for gain thy loftiest ideal.

"WATER AND THE SPIRIT."

Written for the baptism of a little child.



WHEN summer clouds distil
The sweetness of the rain,
What various work it finds to do
Ere it goes back again !

It feeds the mountain rills
As they go hurrying down ;
It cools the pavements, hot as flame,
In the deserted town.

It tinkles day and night
In fountains silver clear,
Tempting the little birds to come
And make their toilet near.

About the roots of flowers
And the great roots of trees,
It lingereth as tenderly
As saint upon his knees.

And many a thirsty soul
 Its limpid sweetness quaffs,
And when the farmer smells the rain
 How merrily he laughs !

O rain that comes from Heaven !
 The life that comes from God,
Ere it returns, more paths than thine
 Shall wonderingly have trod.

On mountain and on plain
 This has a work to do,
A joy to get, a joy to give,
 That cannot be for you.

This shall have rills to feed,
 And cool the heated ways ;
This too shall bubble, fountainwise,
 For many pleasant days.

And this where all is dark,
 As it were underground,
Shall nurse the hidden roots of power
 With never voice or sound.

And this for those who thirst,
 All tired and sore of feet,
Must be the cup of water cold
 For His disciple meet.

BAPTISMAL.

O child, so fresh from heaven,
 What omens sweet and grand
 Run up to kiss thy tiny feet
 Like waves upon the sand !

Wave-omens, kiss and kiss ;
 Our hearts accept you all,
 And dare believe more blessings wait
 Than we have words to call.

BROOKLYN, 1873.

BAPTISMAL.



HIS little child whom I to-day
 Baptize with water clear,
 And dedicate with solemn vows
 To all most high and dear,

It is for you, dear friends, to take,
 And in a holier way
 To re-baptize with tenderest love
 And care from day to day.

For him may friendship twine her wreath,
 And love his rosy chain,
 And conscience seal him to herself,
 Whate'er the loss and pain.

For him may deep baptismal wells
Of joy serenely flow ;
But do not pray that he the power
Of sorrow may not know ;

But rather that through light and dark,
Alike through peace and pain,
He, toiling up, the shining peaks
Of righteousness may gain.

So shall your joy in him be great,
And so the pledge, you give
To God this day, shall be redeemed,
And he shall truly live.

And the name which you have given him
Shall be an honored name,
And men shall mention it with love,
Which better is than fame.

1868.



O maiden at the harbor's mouth !
 By day, with their distracting light,
 Your eyes will wreck more venturous hearts
 Than ever beacon saved by night.

1872.

THE HEART OF IT.

Written upon finding at West Point a blue-bird's nest in an unfilled bombshell.



SUMMER'S day in leafy June ;
 The birds were all in sweetest tune,
 The roses at their best ;
 But fairest of all things to see,
 That perfect day in June for me,
 A blue-bird's peaceful nest.

I found it in a hollow shell
 Which crowned, as I remember well,
 A shapely pyramid ;
 Five little eggs were also there,
 Blue as the sky when 'tis most fair,
 Half in the grasses hid.

O favored shell ! whose kindred went
 On cruel errands to be sent,
 To mutilate and kill ;
 Whilst thou, removed from all the strife,
 Dost feel with love and dawning life
 Thy bosom gently thrill.

I said, "This thing which here I see
Shall be a precious prophecy
Of what the world shall win,
When all the days of war shall cease,
And all the blessed years of peace
Shall gloriously begin."

And better yet: peace *after* war
Hath many an ugly rent and scar
For time to smooth away ;
But peace *in* war doth not await
A blessing coming slow and late, —
Its blessing is to-day.

My bird's-nest in the hollow shell,
A heaven miniature in hell,
Shall symbol be of this :
That in and through and over all,
Whatever seeming curse befall,
God's love for ever is.

He doth not wait till war is done,
And all its barren victories won,
To enter at the door ;
But in the furnace of the strife
He bears for aye a charmed life,
And blesses evermore.

Deep at the heart of all our pain,
 In loss as surely as in gain,
 His love abideth still.
 Let come what will, my feet shall stand
 On this firm rock at His right hand :
 “ Father, it is Thy will.”

JUNE, 1867.

PSYCHE.



WEET story, told so many times,
 But never told so well before,
 As in these tender, simple rhymes
 Which here, so glad, I linger o'er.

How must the bards of old rejoice
 To hear their favorite tale retold
 Here in this “ Earthly Paradise,”
 And by such lips of purest gold !

I lay the cherished volume down,
 And while the firelight's ruddy glow
 Mingles with all that old renown,
 I let the fancies come and go.

O Psyche mine, I muse, in this
 So sweet a tale of ancient days,
 A lesson lurks for thee, I wis,
 Which, heeded well, shall bring thee praise.

Heed thou not those who ask of thee,
 “Hast seen the God thou dost adore?”
“Nay? Then perchance no God is He,
 Nor one whom thou shouldst bow before.”

Heed thou not these : by faith, not sight,
 Thy God of Love is also known.
He also comes to thee by night,
 And whispers, “Thou art mine alone.”

Thou knowest well His voice benign ;
 What joy and comfort He can bring ;
By inward sense thou dost divine
 His Godhead, by no outward thing.

“O God! *my* God!” the spirit cries ;
 “ My joy, my peace beyond compare ;
Not to be seen with curious eyes,
 Still to confess Thy name I dare.

“ Enough, this secret inmost sense,
 Yea, better far than outward sign ;
I know not how, or where, or whence,
 And still I know that Thou art mine.”

THE TRYSTING-PLACE.

“Canst thou by searching find out God?”



FRIEND have I, true lover of my soul,
Whose lightest word to me is dearer far
Than any treasure which the dark earth holds,
Or any beauty of the morning star.

When day is on my heart He enters in
And crowns it with the brightness of His grace ;
But more I joy, when night envelops me,
To feel His presence, though I miss His face.

But there are times when foolish love of self
So girdles me as with a wall of flame,
That, should He seek me, He would find me not,
Nor answer get if He should call my name.

And other times when open to His feet
The doors of my poor house as quickly swing
As if I were a peasant, and the friend
For whom I waited had been born a king.

Thus coming once when I was at my best,
He said " My friend, I would not have thee roam ;
Dost long to see me ? Go about thy work,
And I will come and visit thee at home."

And I in love with all His noble ways,
Feeling that He in nothing could do wrong,
Assented, saying, " Even so I will ;
But quickly come, and make thy visit long,

" That I may speak with Thee of hidden things,
Tell Thee alike of all my joy and pain,
And feel Thy freshness all my spirit through,
As summer's roses feel the summer rain."

And then we parted ; but another day
Had not passed over me before the crowd
Began to laugh at me and call me fool,
With here and there a voice that cried aloud,

" Come, seek with us for him who is your Friend."
And I was weak enough to them obey,
And follow them, despite my better thought,
For many a night and many a weary day.

We found him not, though ever and anon
His name we read in books that were of old,
Which said that once His presence had been sweet,
That He would come and tenderly enfold

To His warm heart some man of humble birth,
And talk with Him in language just as mild
As that which any mother might repeat
Above the cradle of her little child.

And then I said, " This glory must be mine :
With less than this I cannot be content ;"
So left the crowd to seek Him as they would,
And to my home with eager feet I went.

And what to find? My Friend awaiting me,
Here in His place as He had been before ;
And down I sank as if it ought to be
That he, my Friend, would be my Friend no more.

But He, as if, no beggar for His grace,
I came of right into His presence fair,
Lifted me up, and from my speechless face
Put back the masses of my tangled hair,

And kissed me once and kissed me twice again,
And said, " Not greater is Thy need of me
Than is my need, although it seemeth not,
Of living and communing still with Thee."

My words are false, and yet my thoughts are true ;
My friend is God, and ever by His grace,
Although by searching I can find Him not,
My soul doth serve us for a trysting-place.

NOT YET.



N days long, long ago, when a divine unrest
Was surging like a sea in Europe's mighty
breast,

And the fierce Hermit's voice proclaimed the dear
Lord's will,
And drove the nations forth to strike and strive and kill,

If haply they might win from Saracenic horde
The tomb and precious dust of their most precious
Lord, —

As the Crusaders marched upon their weary way,
Never was seen, I trow, a motlier disarray ;

Baron and serf, and dames all beautiful and bright,
And women who had strayed far out into the night ;

And little children too, on mothers' aching breasts,
That heaved with many a sigh for their deserted nests ;

And as they toiled along, and came from place to place,
Now to some little town or hamlet void of grace,

The little children asked of those that carried them
In ever sadder tones, "Is this Jerusalem?"

And ever and again, with more and more regret,
Heard the disheartening words, "Not yet, my child,
not yet."

"Not yet, my child, not yet," I hear the Father say
To the Crusader true, of this our land and day;

"For many a weary league thy feet have yet to tread
Ere through the City's gates thou art in triumph led.

"Thou dost not know how high its gleaming spires
arise,
If with these village roofs thou canst content thine eyes.

"Thou dost not guess how wide is every shining street,
If here thou think'st to find fit passage for thy feet.

"Thou hast not dreamed a dream of men supremely
strong,
Of women sweeter far than poet's sweetest song,

"If with these rustic boors thou canst be pleased to
dwell,
And with these damsels rude believe that all is well.

“ Rest in no triumph won : the best is yet to be,
Not yet from half its woe is the great world set free.

“ The victory of to-day, that seems so passing bright,
Is but a hamlet rude where thou shalt rest to-night.

“ To-morrow up and on ; but not with hope to see,
Ere night shall come again, the City rise on thee.

“ Far off, far off it lies, 'neath the horizon's rim :
Enough for thee to know, *I see Jerusalem !*

“ Thou hast done well thy part, if thou hast done thy
best :
As sure as I am God, I answer for the rest.”

1867.



UNCONSCIOUSNESS.

“Why callest thou me good? There is none good but God.”



READ that, when Beethoven was grown old,
The mighty ravishment of that great power,
Which holds us willing captives to this hour,
Still like a torrent from his bosom rolled,
But on his outward sense it took no hold ;
Deaf were his ears to all that perfect dower
That gushed from him, as fragrance from a flower,
In tenderest joy a million hearts to fold.
I read of One from out whose heart there came
The music of a life at one with God ;
Which makes the ages echo with His fame,
And “Holy Land” the land which erst He trod :
And still, though tender, He with words of blame
Encountered one who dared to call Him good.

SUB-CONSCIOUSNESS.

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.”



ET when the mightiest of music's lords, —
 Master-magician of that finer speech
 Which tells of things that words can never
 reach,
 And room for soul as well as sense affords, —
 When he could hear no more the thrilling chords,
 He was not deaf as is the lonely beach
 To its own music : there was still a breach
 Through which he heard the inarticulate words.
 And He that said, “Why callest thou me good ?”
 Nor heard the music that his life outpoured, —
 He was not stranger to a peace which flowed
 From those calm heights whereto his spirit soared.
 The praise of men might bravely be withstood,
 But not the Love he silently adored.

1871.

THE STORY OF MEDARDUS.



EDARDUS walked his studio-cell,
And sights of Heaven and shapes of Hell
Passed by him in a dream ;
For he a picture fain would paint
Of Mary or some blessed saint,
In altar-niche to gleam.

And there in vision Mary came,
Her face as bright as purest flame,
Her form of matchless grace ;
And dark beneath her feet he sees —
A sight to make the vitals freeze —
The Adversary's face.

“This shall my picture be,” he said,
And seized his brush and straight essayed
To make the vision good ;
Nor cared for food, nor cared for rest,
But day and night, like one possessed,
Before his canvas stood.

'The Virgin lent her kindly aid,
And soon the sacred dream was stayed,
 And on the canvas glowed ;
The Virgin fair as fair could be,
But Satan not more hideously
 Glowers in his own abode.

But as one day Medardus stood
In happy and exultant mood
 Before his picture done,
He felt a chilling presence near,
And knew by something dark and drear
 That he was not alone.

The Adversary spoke — 'twas he —
And promised gifts most lavishly,
 If but Medardus would
Take something from the Virgin's grace
Or make his own accursed face
 With less of hell imbued.

But no : Medardus seized his brush,
And gave the Virgin's face a flush
 Of meaning more divine ;
While on the Adversary's face
He left a more terrific trace,
 A more infernal sign.

Again the Tempter came to him,
But now with threatenings harsh and grim
Of evil things to come ;
But still Medardus would not yield,
And still *her* face with splendor filled
The dark and narrow room.

At last a day had come when all
The people made high festival ;
And, best of all the glee,
The picture by Medardus made
Would in the great square be displayed,
That all might come and see.

And there it was ; and while the crowd
Surged up, with acclamations loud,
To view the wondrous thing,
Medardus close beside it stood,
And praised the Virgin that he could
Make her such offering.

But sudden there was heard a cry,
And then down-swooping from on high
The Adversary sped :
Medardus seized, and high in air
Bore him ; then on the pavement there
He dashed him, bleeding — dead.

But see ! The Virgin seems to move
Her pictured arms ; her face with love
 Unspeakable is sweet :
She reaches from the picture forth,
And lifts Medardus from the earth
 And sets him on his feet.

Again he lives ! Again he sees
The crowd, now hushed upon their knees,
 And hears the Virgin say :
“ As thou wast ever true to me,
To-day I have been true to thee,
 And will be true alway.”

O Heavenly Father, grant that we
May from this tale of mystery
 This simple lesson gain :
That, if Thy visions we obey,
Whatever comes to curse or slay,
 It will but come in vain.

1870.



A TIMELY QUESTION.



F good men were only better,
Would the wicked be so bad?
Here's a story with an answer
To that question strange and sad.

Herod, famed among the wicked,
Called the Great with doubtful right,
When a boy of twenty summers
With banditti made a fight.

Hezekiah, their fierce captain,
Captured he and put to death ;
Many a follower then compelled he
To resign his evil breath.

It was well done : who but thinks so ?
Thought not so the Sanhedrin.
Herod was an Idumean ;
So his deed became a sin.

Let him kill his own banditti ;
Never dare to deal with theirs. .
So they summoned him to meet them
And to settle his affairs.

Scarcely sooner said than done 'twas ;
Herod came ; they wished him back ;
For he came all clad in armor,
With his henchmen at his back.

Cowered the Sanhedrin before him ;
Dared not say a single word ;
Only Sameas withstood him
With a brave, " Thus saith the Lord."

Herod listened while the Rabbi
Execrated all his crimes ;
Then he vanished. Summers flitted ;
Fell the land on evil times ;

Antony and Cæsar ploughed it
With the iron share of war ;
Tore it with their cruel factions,
Left it many a dreadful scar ;

Till, at length, from Rome came Herod,
Sent by Cæsar to be king ; -
At the gates his legions thundered,
Famine gnawed them from within.

Many months in vain he battered,
But, at last, surrender came ;
Then a deed that earned for Herod
Centuries of hateful fame.

Since the Sanhedrin had counselled
Firm resistance to his will,
“ Let them perish,” he commanded,
“ Let their blood the gutters fill.”

Only one he granted mercy, —
Sameas ; the very man
Who had years before withstood him.
Guess the reason if you can.

I have guessed it in the question
Which I venture, strange and sad :
If the good were only better,
Would the wicked be so bad ?

1872.



WHAT WOULD THEY SAY?



F they could find a voice, these little ones,
That freeze by night and hunger all the day,
If they could find a voice and speak to you,
What think you, men and women, would
they say?

They would say, If God had told them, up in heaven,
Of the welcome that awaited them on earth,
And had let them choose to stay with Him for ever,
Or to taste the awful mystery of birth ;

Though it would have been most bitter not to listen
To the prayers of women waiting for their birth,
They would have stayed for ever up in heaven,
And would never have descended to the earth.

But they came, (oh, little feet!) not knowing whither,—
Did not dream but that the earth would serve them
well ;
Did not dream that they were wandering out of heaven
To encounter all the miseries of hell.

“ But now that we are with you, men and women,”
They would say, if they could only find the word,
“ We pray you do not turn to bitter crying
What should be the sweetest music ever heard.

“ For the fathers and the mothers that God gave us
Did for us the very best that they could do,
But they perished with their over-work and sorrow,
And we turn from their dead faces unto you.

“ Will you help us to be innocent and happy ?
Will you help us to be womanly and pure ?
Will you save us from the terrible temptations
That for ever lie in waiting for the poor ?

“ Will you snatch us from the dreadful tooth of famine,
From the sharper tooth of ignorance and sin ?
Will you lead us from this fearful outer darkness
To the light which evermore doth shine within ?

“ If you will, O men and women, we will bless you ;
And the children that God lets you call your own
Shall reward you, with their sweetest baby murmurs,
For not leaving us to perish all alone.”

If they could find a voice, these little ones,
That freeze by night and hunger all the day, —
If they could find a voice and speak to you,
Men and women, it is this that they would say.

A TRUE STORY.

“Greater love hath no man than this.”



FROM a home that had two darlings
One was called and went away, —
Baby Ralph ; and little Willie
Missed him sorely at his play.

As one day he talked about him,
Wondering much where he had gone,
Wishing much he would not tarry,
Brother Willie was so lone, —

Said the mother, so beguiling
Something of her secret pain,
“What would Willie give if only
Baby Ralph could come again ?”

Drooped the little head in silence,
Thinking hard, 'twas plain to see ;
Then he spoke out strong and tender,
“*Mamma I would give God me.*”

SELF-POSSESSION.



T chanced that as I sailed the purple sea, —
 The marvellous sea, the name of which is
 Life, —

There came a day when there was borne to me
 A song, with wondrous melody so rife,

That as I listened to its silver strain,
 And heard its waves of music rise and fall,
 I longed to hear it ever and again, —
 To seek the place from whence it seemed to call.

It was the singing of that siren band
 Who lure so many voyagers astray :
 Such music never was on sea or land,
 And these the words it did so sweetly say : —

“Come, oh ! come.
 Here the winds are soft and low,
 And the sweetest roses blow :
 Here the brightest waters run,
 Dancing, leaping in the sun.
 Come, oh ! come.

“Come, oh ! come.
Here are maidens young and fair,
Roses tangled in their hair ;
But the redness of their lips
Doth the roses all eclipse.
Come, oh ! come.

“Come, oh ! come.
Do you think our song is sweet ?
You should hear their glancing feet,
As they dance : that indeed
Music is for gods to heed.
Come, oh ! come.

“Come, oh ! come.
Every maiden in her eyes
Has a charm that never dies :
He will want no other bliss
Whom they whisper, as they kiss,
‘Come, oh ! come.’

“Come, oh ! come.
Here is every pleasant sound ;
Here is Duty never found, —
Never does her rigid face
Darken this delightful place.
Come, oh ! come.

“Come, oh ! come.
We will lull thy soul to sleep,
And thy senses we will steep
In a joy so rich and strange
Thou shalt never long for change.
Come, oh ! come.”

Then those with whom I voyaged said to me
That they had often heard the song before,
In days when they were young and fair to see,
And would have followed it for evermore,

But that their fellow-voyagers did bind
Their eager bodies to the reeling mast, —
Lest they a melancholy death should find, —
Till of the singing they had heard the last.

And then because my life was fresh in me,
And the warm blood not curdled in my veins,
They said, “E’en so, now, will we do to thee,”
And thought that I would thank them for their pains.

Then brought they cord to bind my restless limbs,
And wax to stop the portals of mine ears,
That I might hear no more of those sweet hymns
That filled my eyes with hot but happy tears.

And, oh! the singing filled me with such fears :

It was so wicked, though it was so sweet,
That half a mind I was to shut my ears,
And let them fasten as they would my feet.

But quick and sudden came the better thought
That this would be a coward thing indeed ;
That for this cause I had been hither brought, —
To let mine heart upon this music feed,

And yet be strong to let it plead in vain,
And so by its accursed haunts to go,
And reach the waters of that open main
Where God's great ships go sailing to and fro.

“ Unhand me ! let me win this fight alone :
Win it not for me with your wax and cord.”
Already was the music fainter grown,
As they obeyed me as a slave his lord.

Then fainter and more faint the singing grew,
Till, though I tried to catch its closing strain,
The last sound died across the waters blue,
And smote no more my bosom with its pain.

And then methought another song I heard,
Sweeter than was the first a thousand times :
It sang as doth the happiest summer bird
To its fond mate, what time Apollo climbs

The ruddy east ; and, as each note I caught,
 I wondered that the first seemed sweet at all.
 So heavenly sweet was that which now besought
 My soul to mingle with the All-in-all.

1868.

THE OTHER SIDE.



CLIMBING the mountain's shaggy crest,
 I wondered much what sight would greet
 My eager gaze whene'er my feet
 Upon the topmost height should rest.

The other side was all unknown ;
 But, as I slowly toiled along,
 Sweeter to me than any song
 My dream of visions to be shown.

Meanwhile the mountain shrubs distilled
 Their sweetness all along my way,
 And the delicious summer day
 My heart with rapture overfilled.

At length the topmost height was gained ;
 The other side was full in view ;
 My dreams — not one of them was true,
 But better far had I attained.

For far and wide on either hand
 There stretched a valley broad and fair,
 With greenness flashing everywhere, —
A pleasant, smiling, home-like land.

Who knows, I thought, but so 'twill prove
 Upon that mountain-top of death,
 Where we shall draw diviner breath,
And see the long-lost friends we love.

It may not be as we have dreamed,
 Not half so awful, strange, and grand ;
 A quiet, peaceful, home-like land,
Better than e'er in vision gleamed.

Meanwhile along our upward way
 What beauties lurk, what visions glow !
 Whatever shall be, this we know
Is better than our lips can say.

BETHEL, ME., 1874.



NOS MORITURI TE SALUTAMUS.



NOT, Heavenly Father, that we ask or hope
 An idle heaven beyond the sea of death,
 Do we, about to die, salute Thee thus
 With our fast-failing breath.

For we have found the dearest joy of earth
 In work for Thee and for our fellow-men;
 Dying, we would not lay the burden down;
 As now, so be it then.

Not that we claim reward for duty done,
 Though ne'er so bravely, in this mortal strife,
 Do we demand of Thee, O God, our God,
 A never-ending life.

For it has been reward enough for us
 To do the duty for its own sweet sake.
 We have our dues, but not the less our cry
 For life to come we make.

Over a few things we have faithful been ;
Now over many do Thou give us rule ;
For work, more work ; for lessons learned, to be
For ever in Thy school.

Not that we want a better world than this ;
Rather that this is so divinely good ;
And what is best in it doth ever taste
As 'twere immortal food.

Not that we hope to reach some happy shore,
Where storms shall never dim the summer sky,
Where struggle, sorrow, pain, shall be no more,
Seems it less hard to die.

We know too well the good of sorrow here ;
What after freshness lurks in every storm ;
What strength and beauty, pain and struggle, bring
In their forbidding form.

Thus, O our Father, we about to die
Salute Thee, not in selfishness or fear ;
And dare believe that there is more beyond
Than we have dreamed of here.

LIFE AFTER DEATH.



OFT was the air of spring, and at his feet
The turf, full swift, was turning green and
sweet,
As from the city Rabbi Nathan passed,
Musing on Him who is the first and last.

The tuneful birds he heard in woodlands dim,
Wooing each other with that vernal hymn,
Which, flowing first from the great heart above,
Keeps fresh the world with its perpetual love.

Anon he came to where with eager toil
An aged man, fretting the fragrant soil
With his sharp spade, did make a space to set
A cobar tree, — the greatest wonder yet !

For seventy years the cobar tree must grow,
Full seventy years leaves bear and shadows throw,
Ere to fair fruit its fair, sweet blossoms turn,
For all the Day-god's ever-flowing urn.

“What madness this !” doth Rabbi Nathan cry ;
“Thou workest here as one not born to die ;
As if thyself didst hope that of this tree
Fruit yet should come to be a joy to thee.”

Then turned the aged man, and gently said :
“This tree shall grow long after I am dead ;
But though its fruit my hands may never gain,
My planting, Rabbi, will not be in vain.

“Have I not eaten of the cobar tree ?
My father's father planted it for me.
So plant I this, that in the coming days
My children's children may my labor praise.”

“Thou fool !” the Rabbi said, “to work for those
Who may or not be, Heaven only knows.
All earthly things full soon must pass away,
'Tis only work for Heaven that will pay.”

He wandered on, and, as the sun now low,
Rushed to its setting, and a sudden glow
Filled all the west, he laid him down to sleep,
Nor guessed how long the charm its power would keep.

For many a moon did wax and wane again,
And many a year did bring its joy and pain,
Ere he awoke, and not far off beheld
What seemed the tree that he had known of eld.

But now it was full grown, and at its root
A man, full grown, was eating of its fruit,
Who said, when asked how came it thus to be,
“My father’s father planted it for me.”

Then Rabbi Nathan knew that seventy years,
With all their precious freight of smiles and tears,
Had fled since he had lain him down to sleep,
And felt the slumber o’er his eyelids creep.

He wandered back into the city street,
But saw no friend with voice of love to greet ;
Yet in the schools where he of old did teach,
He heard the sages quote his silver speech.

And then he saw that not in heaven alone,
But here on earth, we live when we are gone ;
Too late he learned the lesson of to-day :
The world goes on when we are gone away.

The world goes on ; and happiest is he
Who in such wise wins immortality,
That, should he sleep for ever in the grave,
His work goes on and helps the world to save.

MARCH, 1871.

KING EDWIN'S FEAST.



HERE was feasting in the hall
And the beards waggèd all.
Oh! the board was heaped with food,
And the ale was like a flood,
And 'twas bitter winter weather
When King Edwin and his eldormen and thanes
Were a-feasting thus together.

As the board was heaped with food,
So the hearth was piled with wood ;
Ay, with oaken logs a score ;
And the flames did leap and roar,
And they cast a ruddy glow
On King Edwin and his eldormen and thanes
As they feasted in a row.

All at once they were aware
Of a flutter in the air,
As a little sparrow came
In between them and the flame,

Then a moment flew around,
While King Edwin and his eldormen and thanes
Wondered whither he was bound.

Then he vanished through the door,
And they never saw him more ;
But up spoke a noble Thane,
As a silence seemed to reign,
And a wonder seemed to fall
On King Edwin and his eldormen and thanes
As they feasted in the hall :

“ What is all this life of ours,
With its graces and its powers ?
It is like the bird that came
In between us and the flame,
Stayed a moment in the room
With King Edwin and his eldormen and thanes,
Then was off into the gloom.

“ So we come out of the night,
Stay a moment in the light
Of a warm and pleasant room,
Then go forth into the gloom.
Hither somehow tempest-tost,
O King Edwin ! and you, eldormen and thanes,
Then again in darkness lost.”

Then another silence fell
And the first who broke the spell
Was Paulinius, the Christian, and he said,
Bowing low a reverent head
That was white with many years,
To King Edwin and his eldormen and thanes,
And his words were dim with tears :

“ Oh ! not merely tempest-tost,
Not again in darkness lost,
Is the little bird that came
In between us and the flame ;
For the bird will find his nest.
So, King Edwin, and you, eldormen and thanes,
Be not your hearts distressed.

“ Not from darkness comes the soul,
Nor shall darkness be its goal.
For that, too, there is a nest,
Whither flying it shall rest
Evermore. It must be so.”
Said King Edwin and his eldormen and thanes,
“ *Would to God that we might know !*”

BUDDHA'S LESSON.



ISAGOTAMI saw her first child's face ;
She saw him grow in knowledge and in grace ;
But it was only for a little space.

Kisagotami saw him lying dead ;
Against her heart she pressed his curly head,
And forth into the neighbors' houses sped.

"Something to heal my darling's hurt!" she cried.
"Girl, thou art mad," was all that each replied.
But one: "Thy cure with Buddha doth abide."

Still holding the dead child against her heart,
She found the prophet, and made known her smart:
"Buddha, canst cure him with thy wondrous art?"

"A grain of mustard-seed," the sage replied,
"Found where none old or young has ever died,
Will cure the pain you carry in your side."

Kisagotami wandered forth again,
And in the homes of many hundred men
She sought the seed where death had never been.

'Twas all in vain. Then in a lonely wood
Her child with leaves she buried as she could,
And once again in Buddha's presence stood.

" Daughter," he said, " hast found the magic seed ?"
And she : " I find that every heart doth bleed ;
That every house of death hath taken heed."

Then Buddha said : " This knowledge is thy cure.
Thy sorrow, soon or late, for all is sure ;
Therefore, my child, be patient and endure."

FEBRUARY, 1874.

DEATH AND SPRING.

C. P. G.



Y noble friend is dead,
And in his narrow bed
The earth doth gently rest
Upon his gentle breast.

And still the sun doth pour
Its brightness as before ;
And still in every place
The spring comes on apace ;

And still the sweet flowers blow,
The flowers he cared for so ;
And still the wee birds sing,
At rest or on the wing.

“ O cruel sun,” I said,
“ To shine when he is dead ;
O cruel spring, to come
When his dear lips are dumb ;
O cruel flowers, to bloom
When he is in the tomb ;
O cruel birds, to sing,
And he not listening ! ”


Then from an inner sky
I heard a soft reply :
“ Doth any day go by
And not some loved one die,
Though all unknown to thee,
As dear as thine could be ?
Not thou alone dost cry
For nature’s sympathy.
To every mourning heart
The sunshine brings a smart,
The spring seems all too gay,
The flowers are wished away,
The birds’ songs in the trees
Are subtle mockeries.

“ If grief could have its will,
All days were dark and chill.
The spring would never come ;
The flowers would never bloom ;
The birds would never sing,
At rest or on the wing.

“ Rest, troubled spirit, rest :
God knoweth what is best.

“ The sunshine thou dost chide
Hath healing in its tide ;
The spring that comes apace
Shall touch thee with its grace ;
The flowers their sweet perfume
Shall shed upon his tomb ;
The birds in woodlands dim
Shall make lament for him ;
And thou some day shalt see
That it was best for thee
That all thy sorrow was so strangely blent
With nature’s harmony of full content.”

A DOUBLE MEANING.

“AMMA, I see you over there,”
He said, and then he sank to rest,
Happy to feel that she was near
To guard and tend his little nest.

But when the morning broke, it brought
Another night of deeper gloom ;
For the blue heaven of Jamie's eyes
No longer lighted all the room.

No answering word or look or smile
Our hungry hearts might hope to win ;
And the faint breathing fainter grew,
Then stopped, and did no more begin.

“Mamma, I see you over there :”
No simpler words could he have said,
But now that he is gone they seem
A message from the living dead.

“ I see you over there,” it says,
“ Father and Mother, in your pain ;
I see the way that I have come,
But may not traverse it again.

“ But still my thought can go to you,
As yours can come and stay with me ;
And each can know the other near,
And greatly joy with it to be.

“ And so if, as the days go past,
Our thoughts can thus together bide,
Whate'er is missed, are *we* not still
Living together side by side ? ”

This is the message. Well we know
'Tis but the echo of our prayer ;
And yet we trust that 'tis a sign
Of what is true of Here and There.



SEALED ORDERS.

“Thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.”



UR life is like a ship that sails some day
 To distant waters, leagues on leagues away ;
 Not knowing what command to do and dare
 Awaits her when her eager keel is there.

Birth, love, and death are ports we leave behind,
 Borne on by rolling wave and rushing wind ;
 Bearing a message with unbroken seal,
 Whose meaning fain we would at once reveal.

And there are friends who stand upon the shore
 And watch our sail till it is seen no more ;
 And cry, “Oh ! would that we might know the way
 The brave ship goes for many a weary day !”

It may not be. But ever and anon
 Some order, sealed at first, we ope and con ;
 So learn what next, so east or westward fly,
 And ne'er again that port of Birth espy.

How many another craft goes dancing by !
What pennants float from morn and evening sky !
By day how white our wake behind us streams !
By night what golden, phosphorescent gleams !

There comes a day when Love, that lies asleep,
The fairest island in the mighty deep,
Wakes on our sight ; its fragrant shores we reach,
And grates our keel upon its shining beach.

There do we stay awhile ; but soon again
We trim our sails to seek the open main ;
And now, whatever winds and waves betide,
Two friendly ships are sailing side by side.

Where lies their course in vain they seek to know.
“ Go forth,” the Spirit says, and forth they go ;
Enough that, wheresoever they may fare,
Alike the sunshine and the storm they share.

Islands that none e'er visited before
Invite to land with easy-shelving shore ;
Circes and Sirens fling their challenge out,
Charybdis deafens Scylla's deafening shout ;

But still these ships keep joyful company,
And many a new, strange land they haste to see.
In port of Love 'twas pleasant to abide,
But, oh ! Love's sea is very deep and wide.

Ay, deep and wide, and yet there comes a day
When these fond ships must sail a parted way ;
The port of Death doth one of them beguile,
The other lingers for a little while.

Lingers as near as she may dare to go,
And plies the cold, gray offing to and fro ;
Waiting, impatient, for the high command
To sail into the shadow of the land.

Is this the end ? I know it cannot be.
Our ships shall sail upon another sea ;
New islands yet shall break upon our sight,
New continents of love and truth and might.

But still not knowing, still with orders sealed,
Our track shall lie across the heavenly field ;
Yet there, as here, though dim the distant way,
Our strength shall be according to our day.

The sea is His. He made it, and His grace
Lurks in its wildest wave, its deepest place.
Our truest knowledge is that He is wise ;
What is our foresight to His sweet surprise ?

NO MORE SEA.

I.



S, when the friends we dearly love
Go sailing over sea,
For all the joy to which they go,
Our hearts will saddened be ;

So when upon that sea which rolls
All earth and heaven between,
Those whom we love, upon the deck
Of death's great ship are seen ;

For all the joy to which they go,
Though heaven be e'er so sweet,
And e'er so good and wonderful
The folk they go to meet ;

As with intensest gaze we watch,
And see them fade from sight,
God help us, but our human hearts
Are any thing but light !

II.

As, when the friends we dearly love
Have gone beyond the sea,
The far-off lands in which they bide
More real get to be ;

So when our loved ones once have crossed
Death's lone and silent sea,
And in a country new and strange
Found immortality,

The heavenly land in which they bide,
Which erst did ever seem
An unsubstantial pageant vast, —
A dreamer's idle dream, —

Becomes as solid to my soul
As is the earth I tread,
What time I walk with reverent feet
The city of the dead.

Not Europe seems so real to me,
The Alps not so eterne,
As that dear land for which at times
My heart doth inly burn.

And not so sure am I that whom
 The Atlantic's waves divide
 Will meet again some happy day,
 And linger side by side,

As that the day shall surely come
 When I with all I love
 Shall meet again, and clasp and kiss,
 In that dear land above.

MAY, 1870.

THREE HAPPY SOULS.



RARE sweet day of June! What is it gives
 To thy dear rapture a diviner power?
 It is that I have seen three happy souls,
 All in the fleeting of a single hour.

One was a maiden, with forereaching sense
 Feeling amid the lustre of her hair
 The fragrant blossoms of that wifely crown
 Which, when June days are longest, she will wear.

And all her thoughts were going to and fro,
 And building from that blessed day and hour
 A nest wherein her heart already sang
 Sweet songs of home and love's eternal power.

One was a mother, and her babe, new-born
Lay on her arm and murmured 'gainst her heart
Something that had no need of words to tell
The mystic meaning it would fain impart.

She understood. God had revealed Himself
Once more, as in the manger-nest of old ;
She, too, had seen the Father, full of grace, —
Did even then Him to her bosom hold.

And these were happy. But the happiest
Was one who waited for a voice to say,
“Friend, come up higher.” Fearing only this :
That he might be too willing to obey.

For pain had worked on him its perfect will,
And weaned him quite from all our earthly ways,
And it was joy to think of rest at last
And the long quiet of the heavenly days.

The maiden love had found, the mother life ;
He had found both in finding death alone ;
And, as the bridegroom murmurs to the bride,
Murmured his heart, “My Beautiful, my own !”

Oh, think not that with fancies sweet and fond
He cheated his poor heart to false repose !
Our bravest hopes are shadows vague and cold
Of better things the Spirit only knows.

The child shall grow apace ; the bridal wreath
Shall win a costlier beauty and perfume ;
While he whom we call dead shall work and wait
In other gardens of perennial bloom.

BROOKLYN, June, 1872.

THE TWO WAITINGS.

I.



DEAR hearts, you were waiting a year ago
For the glory to be revealed ;
You were wondering deeply, with bated breath,
What treasure the days concealed.

Oh, would it be this, or would it be that ?
Would it be girl or boy ?
Would it look like father or mother most ?
And what should you do for joy ?

And then one day, when the time was full,
And the spring was coming fast,
The tender grace of a life out-bloomed,
And you saw your baby at last.

Was it, or not, what you had dreamed ?
It was, and yet it was not ;
But, oh ! it was better a thousand times
Than ever you wished or thought.

II.

And now, dear hearts, you are waiting again,
While the spring is coming fast ;
For the baby that was a future dream
Is now a dream of the past ;

A dream of sunshine, and all that's sweet ;
Of all that is pure and bright ;
Of eyes that were blue as the sky by day,
And as soft as the stars by night.

You are waiting again for the fulness of time,
And the glory to be revealed ;
You are wondering deeply, with aching hearts,
What treasure is now concealed.

Oh, will she be this, or will she be that ?
And what will there be in her face
That will tell you sure that she is your own
When you meet in the heavenly place ?

As it was before, it will be again,
 Fashion your dream as you will ;
 When the veil is rent, and the glory is seen,
 It will more than your hope fulfil.

APRIL, 1873.

WHERE?



HAT is her body lying there,
 So sweetly still,
 As if but sleep had worked thereon
 Its perfect will.

The violets strewn about her seem
 To haunt her rest ;
 And, as in dreams, she clasps the rose
 . Upon her breast.

How strange it is we are so sure
She is not there,
 Though all her precious outwardness
 Is still so fair !

For we have seen her just as still
 Full oft before ;
 But now we know those drowsy lids
 Will open no more.

She is not there ; and, if not there,
Where must she be ?
Elsewhere or nowhere, that at least
Our thought can see.

Nowhere? But then — oh, shallow thought! —
She is no more.
The most has perished, but the least
Is as before.

This cannot perish ; this may change
From form to form ;
In grass and blossom reaching up
To sun and storm.

A thousand summers shall grow pale
Through all the land,
And still her precious dust shall lie
In God's right hand ;

And, lying there, shall take the shape
He thinketh best,
But never lovelier than is now
On it impressed.

And shall the garment that she wore
Exist so long,
And she that wore it be — as is
An ended song ?

An ended song? But even that
Is somewhere still,
It doth the heart with burden sweet
Of memory fill.

May not her Somewhere be as much
As that; no more?
To walk in dream-land up and down
A sobbing shore?

To live in deeds, for her dear sake
Made pure and true;
In great aspirings that from her
Their being drew.

But that which lieth there, so still,
In grass and flower
Shall live again, nor less for that
Be memory's dower.

And shall the mask she wore have thus
A twofold life,
And she that wore it only live
Where thought is rife?

And so from Nowhere back my heart
Returns in glee;
She is not there, since, having been,
She still must be.

But, oh ! how vast and dim appears
That Elsewhere land,
Where she, with others gone before,
Walks hand in hand !

My thought goes forth to seek her there,
But soon returns,
Dazed by that rose of light wherein
Her spirit burns.

Content to leave her there in peace
With her dear God,
It wanders in the earthly paths
Her feet have trod.

Then from her high and holy place,
Full soon I know,
Her thought sweeps down, my thought to meet
With music low.

With such sweet trysts as these my soul
Can be content,
Until my soul with hers again
In heaven is blent.

If thou in thy new home canst be
As patient, Sweet,
Our days will be most happy till
Again we meet.

THEIR THOUGHTS AND OUR THOUGHTS.

F. A. B. AND J. E. C.



IX years have faded since she went away,
Six years for her to live in heavenly places,
To learn the look of blessed angel faces ;
Six years to grow as only angels may.

I wonder oft what she is doing there,
By the still waters that for ever flow ;
What mighty secrets she has come to know ;
What graces won, divinely sweet and fair.

I wonder who of those that went before,
And those that followed on her shining way,
She has met there in heaven's auroral day,
And if they talk their earth life o'er and o'er.

I think this very morning they are met,
She and one other only three years gone,
In some dear place in heaven secure and lone,
To talk of things they never can forget.

For I am sure that naught of their new life,
No grace or glory that is there revealed,
The fountains of past love has ever sealed ;—
That these will ever be with sweetness rife.

I cannot think of them as they are now,
Of the new light that shines upon their faces ;
I cannot image forth their angel graces ;
And I am glad, so glad, that it is so.

We shall get used to such things by and by ;
The angels will not miss the look they wore ;
For us they wear the look they wore before ;
No other look with that, for us, can vie.

So we will think of them just as they were,
Their voices sweet and all their pleasant ways ;
And thoughts like these shall help us through
the days
Until we go to meet them where they are.

MARBLEHEAD, July, 1872.



WITH A BOOK OF BALLADS.

“ The time is short.”



WEET wife, no ballad, when our days are o'er,
Shall tell the story of our peace and pain ;
One little grave shall hold our common dust,
And feel the fresh'ning of the summer rain.

A few short years, mayhap, our names shall live
In children's voices, or their children's sweet ;
Then all shall be as if we had not known
This joy of life which is so strange and fleet.

Yet none the less, so long as life shall last,
We will drink deep of joy's eternal spring ;
Ay, live as if this life must be our all, —
As if swift death would sleep eternal bring.

The time *is* short ; the more the reason then
For filling it as full as it can hold
With thrills of beauty, yearnings for the truth,
And joys of love and labor manifold.

Then should it chance, as we would fain believe,
Life's glory waits us in some other sphere,
Its first great joy shall be we did not miss
God's meaning in the glory that is here.

RECOGNITION.



WHEN souls that have put off their mortal gear
Stand in the pure, sweet light of heaven's
day,
And wondering deeply what to do or say,
And trembling more with rapture than with
fear,
Desire some token of their friends most dear,
Who there some time have made their happy stay,
And much have longed for them to come that way,
What shall it be, this sign of hope and cheer?
Shall it be tone of voice or glance of eye?
Shall it be touch of hand or gleam of hair
Blown back from spirit-brows by heaven's air, —
Things which of old we knew our dearest by?
Oh, naught of this ; but, if our love is true,
Some secret sense shall cry, 'Tis you and — you !

MAY, 1876.

IDENTITY.

HOW shall I know myself when I have come
To that strange land beyond the sea of death,
Ere the first voice that speaks with heavenly
breath

Shall, out of all the sweet and murmurous hum,
Call me by name? How know ere I am known
That I am he who once in other spheres
Drank to the lees so many golden years
And called so many loving hearts my own?
Doubtless, my God, in ways I cannot guess,
Thou wilt reveal me to my doubting sense;
But, O my love, the sign that most shall bless,
And bring the swiftest, surest confidence,
Shall be that in my inmost heart I find
The thought of thee so lovingly enshrined.

MAY, 1876.

TIMES AND SEASONS.

INVOCATION.

EVERLASTING, Holy One !
Many a well-beloved son
Thou dost choose like him of old,
For Thy truth's sake to be bold.
Not by any outward sign
Dost Thou show Thy will divine ;
Deep within Thy voice doth cry,
And our spirits make reply.

Lo, we stand before Thee now,
And the silent inward vow
Thou hast heard, in that profound,
Where is neither voice nor sound ;
Thou hast heard, and Thou wilt bless
With Thy might and tenderness ;
We have come to do Thy will ;
With Thy love our spirits fill.

TIMES AND SEASONS.



ANOTHER YEAR.



HAT this shall be a better year
Than any passed away,
I dare not at its open door
To wish or hope or pray.

Not that the years already gone
Were wearisome and lone ;
That so with hope too long deferred
My heart has timid grown.

Nay, rather that they all have been
So sweet to me and good,
That if for better I should ask
'Twould seem ingratitude.

And so with things far off and strange
I do not care to cope,
But look in Memory's face and learn
What largess I may hope.

Another year of setting suns,
Of stars by night revealed,
Of springing grass, of tender buds
By Winter's snow concealed.

Another year of Summer's glow,
Of Autumn's gold and brown,
Of waving fields, and ruddy fruit
The branches weighing down.

Another year of happy work,
That better is than play ;
Of simple cares, and love that grows
More sweet from day to day.

Another year of baby mirth
And childhood's blessed ways,
Of thinker's thought and prophet's dream
And poet's tender lays.

Another year at Beauty's feast,
At every moment spread,
Of silent hours when grow distinct
The voices of the dead.

Another year to follow hard
Where better souls have trod ;
Another year of life's delight,
Another year of God.

EASTER MORNING.



GENTLE tumult in the earth,
A murmur in the trees,
An odor faint, but passing sweet,
Upon the morning breeze, —
The heralds these, whom thou dost send,
Dear Spring, that we may know
How soon the land, from side to side,
Shall with thy beauty glow.

And 'tis by tokens faint as these,
O Truth, that makest free !
That thou dost give assurance strong
Of better things to be :
Of higher faith and holier trust ;
Of love more deep and wide ;
Of hope, whose anchor shall not break,
Whatever storms betide !

O Truth of God, it is not ours
Thy Summer to foretell,
Nor ours to taste the fruit which now
Doth in the blossom swell ;

The freshness of the blooming fields,
The splendor of the sky,
Are prophecies which Summer yields
That God is ever nigh ;
They tell us that in joyful mood
He made both land and sea ;
That in such mood His children should
His fellow-workers be.

Then who can time for sighs afford ?
Let all the children make
A joyful noise unto the Lord,
And sweetest comfort take.
And let us all in love unite
To make this fleeting day
A blessing that shall still be bright
When years have passed away.

EAGLESWOOD, N. J.



A SONG FOR THE HARVEST.



COME, list to a song for the Harvest :
Thanksgiving and honor and praise
For all that the bountiful Giver
Hath given to gladden our days.

For the grain and the corn in their plenty,
For the grapes that were gathered with song ;
For pumpkins so brave with their yellow,
They had lived upon sunbeams so long ;

For cranberries down in the meadow,
And the buckwheat that flames on the hill,
And blueberries tempting the children
To wander and pick them at will ;

For the peaches that blush through their pallor,
Or glow like a pretty quadroon,
As they dream of the sun in the morning,
Or welcome his kisses at noon ;

For the sweet-smelling hay and the clover,
That sweeten the breath of the kine ;
And the apples that lingered, as dreading
The air and the light to resign.

And not for the fruit-harvest only
We offer our thanks and our praise ;
Not less have the leaves and the blossoms
Made better and brighter the days.

The leaves that delight with their greenness,
That soften the heat with their shade,
And rustle so crisply in Autumn,
To startle the lover and maid.

For the blossoms that whiten in May-time
The ground, as with snow, as they fall ;
For the flowerets that whisper their meanings
In cottage and hovel and hall.

Ay, thanks for the harvest of Beauty !
For that which the hands cannot hold !
The harvest eyes only can gather,
Which only our hearts can enfold !

We have reaped it on mountain and moorland ;
We have gleaned it from meadow and lea ;
We have garnered it in from the cloudlands ;
We have bound it in sheaves from the sea.

And thanks that the whole of the harvest
Is not for the children of men ;
That the birds and the beasts are remembered,
The dwellers in river and fen ;

That He giveth them meat in due season,
And heareth their cry when they call, —
The tiniest, weakest among them,
The hugest and strongest of all.

But the song it goes deeper and higher ;
There are harvests which eye cannot see :
They ripen on mountains of Duty,
They are reaped by the brave and the free.

And these have been gathered and garnered ;
Some golden with honor and gain,
And some as with heart's-blood made ruddy,
The harvests of sorrow and pain.

Alas, for our pitiful singing !
For all it has lasted so long,
The half of our rapture and wonder
Has not been expressed in our song.

But He who is Lord of the Harvest —
The Giver who gladdens our days —
Will know if our hearts are repeating,
Thanksgiving and honor and praise.

BEFORE CHRISTMAS.



HE Christmas-time draws on apace ;
The happy crowds go up and down ;
There's joy and hope in all the town ;
And in each little maiden's face

A look of expectation sweet,
That comes of musing oft and long
On what that day of gift and song
Shall bring to her as offering meet.

But I will sit alone and dream
Of Him who gave the day its name ;
And think of all His wondrous fame,
And if to Him it strange doth seem

That in these happy, careless ways,
As often as the years come round,
We mark with light, and joyful sound,
His advent and His toilsome days.

And deeper still my thoughts shall go,
And ponder if He hears above,
'Mid all the heavenly peace and love,
Our weary talking to and fro ;

Our asking how it all began,
And what the secret of His power,
That since He came until this hour,
The world has said, " Behold the man ! "

Behold the man ! Behold the God !
Ah, which to say, and how, and why !
In vain our tangled reasons try
The path so many feet have trod.

O man of sorrows, man of joy ! —
Of joy for all Thy strife and scars, —
Whereso Thou art among the stars,
In peace that nothing can destroy, —

Though we our voices may not blend
With that hoarse chant the centuries raise,
Yet is it not a sweeter praise
To say, " Our brother and our friend " ?

And if beyond this verge of time,
We know Thee better as Thou art,
Wilt Thou not clasp us heart to heart,
As fills our ears the heavenly chime ?

THE CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS.



DEAR friends and little children all,
Thrice welcome to our Christmas ball!
For 'tis a ball, and not a tree,
Your eyes can very plainly see.
“A Christmas ball? Strange Christmas cheer!”
Some one exclaims who isn't here,
When first upon his ear shall fall
The news of this our Christmas ball.
“A Christmas ball and in a church!
This leaves *my* notions in the lurch.
I've heard of balls when princes come
To see Americans at home;
And there is one when'er the Japs
Come over with their funny traps;
And firemen's balls are always plenty,
And leap-year balls, — I've been to twenty,
More or less, — and cattle-show
Most always ends with one, you know;
But such a thing at Christmas time
Is worse in reason than in rhyme.

“ And in a church ! I wonder what
John Calvin would have said to that !
I guess he would have made a face
At such a use of such a place.
That ‘ David danced before the Lord ’
Doth no good precedent afford,
For that was in the times of old, —
‘ The good old times,’ ‘ the age of gold,’ —
And things that now seem dreadful bad
Were then — the best that could be had.”

E'en so perchance would fume away
Some uninstructed Mr. A.
Entirely in the dark, you see,
Where all is plain to you and me.
If he the facts could all discover,
No doubt he would at once recover,
And say it wasn't bad at all,
This notion of a Christmas ball ;
Though all the dancing it implies
Is the dear joy-dance in your eyes.

And what for us shall signify
This little world that from on high
Descends, with gifts and tapers bright,
To meet our wonder and delight ?
This little world ? Ay, there I find
A meaning suited to my mind,

And that will help explain this rout
Of things all scattered here about,
As if this were the very track
Old Santa travels with his pack,
And he had shed them as he went
And left them here for our content.

You know (the biggest of you do)
'Tis said — and I suppose it's true —
That all the stars that gem the sky,
And every night go trooping by,
Were once, long since, one mighty world
Through space with swiftest motion hurled,
And flinging off from time to time,
Just as a poet does a rhyme,
A star, henceforth to go its way,
Companion of the night and day.
'Tis said the stars this striking merit
From the parental mass inherit:
As soon as they are fairly "out,"
They take to flinging things about ;
And all the worlds that people space
Were flung, it seems, into their place.

And so if I could dream a dream,
Which like a solid fact would seem,
'Twould be that from this mimic world
All of these gifts had straight been hurled,



And yet — O marvel to be spoken! —
Not one of all your heads is broken.

O little world, thou hast for me
A word of deeper mystery!
O little world, shine clear and bright
Until I read your meaning right!
Gift-laden, to our hearts rehearse
How God's gift-laden universe
Shines ever fair and ever bright
With love and comfort and delight.

This little pageant, well I know,
Inspired by love did sweetly grow;
And well I know the pageant vast,
All beautiful from first to last,
Of worlds on worlds in phalanx deep,
From suns that blaze to vines that creep,
From planets singing on their way
To flowers that dread the eye of day,
From rivers that rejoicing go
To brooks that murmur sweet and low,
From genius, with its years of fame,
To simple lives devoid of blame, —
Oh, well I know this pageant fair
Is proof of love beyond compare!

O Love, that dost with goodness crown
The years through all the ages down!



'Tis in Thy strength the mountains stand,
The seasons roll at Thy command,
And rooted are all things that bless
Deep in Thy everlastingness.
The pith of all our Christmas cheer
Is that Thy life is ever near ;
Within Thy circling arms we lie,
Lapped in Thy great infinity.

All praise and honor to His name,
Who, spite of taunt and cruel shame,
Was brave to teach, as wise to know,
That these great things are surely so.
For this our loving court we pay
At His dear feet on Christmas day ;
For this through all the coming years,
In all our joys and hopes and fears,
We still will pay Him reverence due,
And in His witness, brave and true,
Hear echoes clear, through all the din,
Of that deep voice which speaks within.

But while I speak the tapers waste
And little hearts are all in haste
To know what token, simple-sweet,
Is soon their happy eyes to greet.
A merry Christmas, then, to all !
And, when at length our Christmas ball

Shall into darkness fade again,
 Long in our hearts may it retain
 The beauty that it wears to-day,
 To light and cheer us on our way.

BROOKLYN, 1872.

GRACE BEFORE MEAT.



GAIN the Christmas board is spread,
 Again we gather round ;
 And thanks too deep for words go up
 To God without a sound.

Thanks for the common blessings first,
 The commonest of all,
 The daily bread, the manna sweet,
 That never fails to fall, —

The daily bread, the daily joy,
 The greeting morn and eve,
 The kiss of love, the kiss of peace,
 Which daily we receive.

And if with all the joy He sends
 Some grief is also there,
 We praise Him still that He doth give
 The patience that can bear, —

Can bear, and through the bearing find,
 Within the hardest lot,
Some hidden grace which none may know
 Save those who have it got.

But shall this merry time go past,
 And thanks remain unsped
For Him who said so long ago,
 “ I am the living Bread ; ”

For Him, star-lit by Mary's smile,
 Whom simple shepherds found,
And wise men from the brooding East,
 Where oxen stood around ?

No wonder that they worshipped Him !
 He was a baby sweet ;
They had been foolish not to kneel
 And kiss His rosy feet.

But little recked they as He lay
 In such a lowly place,
That He should be the Man of men,
 The captain of His race.

We differ when we speak of Him,
 Our words are not the same,
But in our heart there burns for aye
 One undivided flame.

Our words must differ, but our hearts
 Still yield Him reverence due ;
 We love in spite of all our creeds ;
 Our love at least is true.

And if, above the starry skies,
 He knows of what is here,
 He knows there is a place for Him
 At all our Christmas cheer.

1873.

ANNUS MIRABILIS.

I.



W^HAT year of all Thy years, O Father mine,
 Is not more wonderful than words can say ?
 The starry night, the splendor of the day —
 Are not, all years, these benefactions thine ?
 Doth not each spring reveal a life divine,
 Each summer nourish with unstinted ray,
 Each autumn make the leafy woodlands gay,
 And load with clusters every clinging vine ?
 Doth not each winter make the silent stars
 Into more awful spaces seem withdrawn,

And deck with softer radiance the cars
That speed the sunset and bring back the dawn,
And over hill and valley slow unfold
A vesture rarer than were cloth of gold?

II.

And yet, O God! the half has not been told.
I have not named the rapture of delight
When new-born spirits break upon our sight ;
When love, at first so timid, groweth bold,
And all the highest heavens seem unrolled,
That we may read in characters of light
Of days to which succeeds no dark'ning night ;
But the night cometh drearily and cold.
Yet is death wonderful as well as life,
And wonderful the hope of life in store,
And wonderful all labor and all strife
For better things than e'er have been before.
Yea, God, the wonder of thy humblest years
Fills all my soul with laughter and with tears.

DECEMBER 31, 1874.

HYMN

FOR A FRIEND'S INSTALLATION.



ACKWARD looking o'er the past,
 Forward too with eager gaze,
 Stand we here to-night, O God!
 At the parting of the ways.

Tenderest thoughts our bosoms fill;
 Memories all bright and fair
 Seem to float on spirit-wings
 Downward through the silent air.

Hark! through all their music sweet
 Hear you not a voice of cheer?
 'Tis the voice of Hope which sings:
 Happy be the coming year!

Father, comes that voice from Thee;
 Swells it with Thy meaning vast:
 Good in all the future stored;
 Good evolved from all the Past.

Lo, Thy messenger is come,
 Burdened with this word divine!
 He Thy New Year's gift to us;
 May He make us wholly Thine!

Servant of the living God,
 Come and let us work with Thee,
 For the Love that faileth not,
 For the Truth that maketh free.

JANUARY 1, 1873.

A VALENTINE.



THOU that comest from the mystic East,
 With caskets full of gold and spicery,
 Keep not their treasure all for him alone
 To whom thy heart is pledged in fealty ;
 But sometimes fling thy largess all abroad,
 That with thy lord we may rejoice in thee.

Sing to thy nest thy tenderest, sweetest song,
 But nurse some strain to gladden us at times
 When we are sick with longing to be stilled
 By some dear poet's music-breathing rhymes,
 That on our mind and sense more grateful fall
 Than sound far heard of old cathedral chimes.

What thou shalt sing — thy heart shall teach thee that,
 Quick-beating with its unimagined bliss :
*A song to wean us from all other worlds
 Till we have learned how wonderful is this.*
 Lady, let such a song as this be thine,
 And all our hearts shall be thy Valentine.

OOKLYN, 1876.

CATCHING SUNSHINE.



Y next door neighbor's little girl,
A cunning two-year-old,
Wondered one day why drooped her flowers,
And pleaded to be told.

Then said her mamma, "Here in-doors
The sunshine doesn't come
To warm and bless and gladden them,
And make them feel at home."

Next morning when she went to seek
Her darling at her play,
She found her standing in the sun
In just the queerest way ;

For there she held aloft a cup
Above her pretty head.
"What *are* you doing, Lolo dear?"
Mamma, astonished, said.

And she, her cup still held aloft, —
 Bless her, ye Heavenly Powers! —
“I’m catching sunshine, mamma dear,
 To give my ’ittle f’owers.”

Type of all children there was she,
 Who in life’s garden stand,
Still holding tenderly aloft
 Their life-cup in their hand.

We, buried in our sordid cares,
 Are plants that droop and die ;
They catch God’s sunshine as it flows
 For ever from on high.

Upon our weary, aching hearts
 They let its blessing fall ;
Their office this in every land,
 In cottage, hut, and hall.

And so the world is kept alive,
 And freshened every minute,
By the dear grace that overflows
 The children who are in it.

HYMN

WRITTEN FOR MY DIVINITY-SCHOOL GRADUATION.



ETERNAL Ruler of the ceaseless round
Of circling planets singing on their way ;
Guide of the nations from the night profound
Into the glory of the perfect day ;
Rule in our hearts, that we may ever be
Guided, and strengthened, and upheld by
Thee.

We are of Thee, the children of Thy love,
The brothers of Thy well-beloved Son ;
Descend, O Holy Spirit, like a dove,
Into our hearts, that we may be as one ;
As one with Thee, to whom we ever tend,
As one with Him, our brother and our friend.

We would be one in hatred of all wrong,
One in our love of all things sweet and fair,
One with the joy that breaketh into song,
One with the grief that trembles in to prayer,

One in the power that makes Thy children free
To follow truth, and thus to follow Thee.

Oh, clothe us with Thy heavenly armor, Lord !
Thy trusty shield, Thy sword of love divine ;
Our inspiration be Thy constant word,
We ask no victories that are not Thine ;
Give or withhold, let pain or pleasure be,
Enough to know that we are serving Thee.

CAMBRIDGE, 1864.

HYMN

FOR A FRIEND'S GRADUATION.



ORTH from the calm and still retreat,
Into the world so wide ;
Forth from the gently rocking fleet,
Into the rushing tide.

We know Thy seas are deep and wide,
But all their waves are Thine ;
And over them, our course to guide,
Thy stars for ever shine.

Here have our eyes beheld their light,
Now by it let us fly,
Before the gale and through the night,
To do Thy bidding high ;

To bear our little freight of truth
To every waiting shore ;
To seek beyond the verge of youth,
For ever more and more.

Oh that each had a stancher ship,
A crew more sternly bound,
To follow the horizon's dip
And sail the world around !

CAMBRIDGE, 1868.



A DEDICATION HYMN.



HERE in a corner of Thy house,
Rock-ribbed and built since time began,
And building yet with art divine
Co-working with the art of man,
Our hands, O God, have built a shrine,
Our hearts have vowed to make it Thine.

Here may we come with eager feet,
To sing Thy love and learn Thy law,
And quench our inmost being's thirst
At those deep springs of sacred awe,
Which underneath our being run,
From sources higher than the sun.

Here may the vastness of Thy house
More clearly to our minds appear ;
Its mystery grand and music sweet
Grow ever to our hearts more dear ;
And Thy dear face, the more we yearn,
Through every glowing window burn.

Oh, here may every thought be pure,
 And every passion self-controlled ;
 Here all our words be kind and true,
 And every purpose high and bold :
 So shall Thy presence fill the shrine,
 And all our hearts and lives be Thine.

1875.

HYMN

FOR A FRIEND'S ORDINATION.



ORD of all visions fair and sweet,
 Thy name we praise that here to-day
 We welcome one who did not dare,
 Thy vision seen, to disobey ;

But up and followed on and on,
 Though rough the way and dark the night,
 Led ever by that threefold gleam,
 The True, the Beautiful, the Right.

It lured him on through many lands ;
 Through generations strange and old ;
 To Moses with his face aglow,
 To Jesus with his lips of gold.

No longer now in cloistered calm
 He feels its influence benign ;
 It leads him forth ; it leads him here,
 To make us his as he is Thine.

Lord of all visions sweet and fair,
 Thou carest not for time or place ;
 Still as of old the promise stands, —
 The pure in heart shall see Thy face.

1870.

THE LAW OF LIBERTY.

Sung at a Festival of the Free Religious Association.



THOU, whose name is blazoned forth
 On our banner's gleaming fold,
 Freedom ! thou whose sacred worth
 Never yet has half been told,
 Often have we sung of thee,
 Dear to us as dear can be.

But to-night we sing of one
 Older, graver far, than thou ;
 With the seal of time begun
 Stamped upon her awful brow :
 Freedom, latest born of time,
 Knowest thou her form sublime ?

She is Duty : in her hand
 Is a sceptre heaven-brought ;
 Hers the accent of command,
 Hers the dreadful, mystic *Ought* ;
 Hers upon us all to lay
 Heavier burdens every day.

But her bondage is so sweet !
 And her burdens make us strong ;
 Wings they seem to weary feet,
 Laughter to our lips and song :
 Freedom, make us free to speed
 Wheresoever she may lead.

JUNE, 1876.

SAINT LOUIS.



NOT that Saint Louis, who so long ago
 Led the Crusaders on their fateful way
 To strike, and strive, if haply they might win
 The dear Christ's tomb from Saracenic sway.

Not him, but *our* Saint Louis, whom the world,
 The great loud world, will never widely know, —
 Safe folded in our hearts his memory lies,
 Like sweetest mayflowers under winter's snow.

But he was more to us who knew him well,
And loved him for his simple, modest worth,
Than all the saints who died so long ago,
And left great names to quicken all the earth.

We never saw their faces strong and sweet ;
We never heard their voices kind and low ;
And never looked their eyes into our own
With such fond looks as only mothers know.

He left us in the golden summer-time,
His heart all hot with thoughts of joys to come,
Counting the hours ere he should taste again
The welcome beauty of his country-home.

Soon with its "all, so far," his letter came,
To share his joy with dear ones left behind,
And then — oh, words so hard and strange and sad,
Though tender as the tenderest hearts could find !

Gone in the bloom and beauty of his youth !
His warm heart quenched by the remorseless stream !
Is it the truth ? or shall we wake to find
That it is but the shadow of a dream ?

Truth, and not truth ; dead, and he liveth still ;
Ay, and yet speaketh, and we hear him say,
" Though 'this is all, so far,' it is not all,
And we shall meet again some happy day."

IN JUNE.

"I show you a mystery."



FRIEND, your face I cannot see,
 Your voice I cannot hear,
 But for us both breaks at our feet
 The flood-tide of the year ;—
 The summer-tide all beautiful
 With fragrance, and with song
 Sung by the happy-hearted birds
 To cheer the months along.

And so the mystery I show
 Is this, all simple-sweet :
 Because God's summer-tide so breaks
 At yours and at my feet,
 We're not so very far apart
 As it at first would seem ;
 We're near each other *in the Lord* ;
 The miles are all a dream.

JUNE 19, 1873.

HYMN

FOR THE ORDINATION OF MRS. CELIA BURLEIGH.



O preach Good Tidings ! this the call
 Heard by Thy chosen one of old,
 And from his heart the tide uprose,
 And from his lips the current rolled.

To preach Good Tidings ! once again
 That call divine is heard to-day ;
 And to obey the high command
 Thy servant here is on her way.

Tidings of faith and hope she brings ;
 Of faith that cannot doubt or fear,
 But in the darkest hour can trust
 A loving Father ever near :

Of hope for all who live or die ;
 For all who sin or suffer pain ;
 That all who here must say farewell
 May somehow, somewhere, meet again.

Tidings of love from God to man ;
 Of human love that makes reply ;
 Of man for man, of each for all,
 Here and for evermore on high.

O Father ! may her word be blest
 To all who love this sacred place ;
 Here may they learn to love Thy law,
 And here rejoice to see Thy face.

OCTOBER, 1871.

HORACE GREELEY.



IF he could know ! we say ; could he but know
 A nation's grief above his stricken form ;
 What tears are shed ; how tender, pure, and
 warm,

From eyes unused to weeping, fast they flow !

If he could know how bitterly they rain
 For words that had no depth of root at all ;
 If he could feel them on his fragrant pall
 Dropping among the flowers like welcome rain !

If he could know that it has all come back, —
 The love we bore him in the days of old ;
 When he among the boldest was so bold
 To tempt the flame of slavery's lurid rack !

If he could know how prudence fought with love
In hearts that did him silent reverence still ;
How hard it was to strike through him to kill
The hydra that so long against him strove !

If he could know that from his burning speech
We learned such hate and horror of his foe —
The foe of all — that we perforce were slow
To deem it fled for ever out of reach !

If he could know how death has brushed away
The films of passion from our aching eyes ;
How through our tears again we see him rise
To the full stature of an earlier day !

It may not be. He lieth cold and still ;
The fire is out that burned in that great frame
With genial warmth, anon with searing flame.
It may not be, call loudly as you will.

It may not be? Look up to heaven above !
It is not he that lieth cold and dead.
The garment this ; the man himself has sped
To higher seats and tasks of purer love.

But nought of all the glory that abounds
In his new home does he so precious deem
As these fond tears that o'er his ashes stream,
While his great spirit walks its higher rounds.

CHARLES SUMNER.

Si monumentum requiris, circumspice.



Y, look around ; but thou may'st not behold
 Aught built of stone and carved magnificent,
 With dome or spire high up towards heaven
 sent,
 And blazoned all with crimson and with gold.
 By no such wonders can his worth be told ;
 Not such indeed shall be his monument,
 Our statesman, who upon God's errands went,
 For freedom's sake the boldest of the bold.
 But look around, and say what thou dost see ;
 Or think it solemnly with bated breath :
 A nation with no man who is not free ;
 A nation living after years of death ;
 And yet to live a life more pure and high
 Because this man for her could live and die.

MARCH, 1874.

AFTER SWEET SINGING.

“Consider the lilies.”



THINK if He who spake that blessed word
Had sat with us this summer-morning hour,
And heard thy tones, so full of music's power,
He would have thought some mellow-throated
bird,

The praise of his sweet kin just having heard,
Had echoed back the praise of bird and flower
From where he listened in his leafy bower,
So giving thanks for honor high conferred.

I think that if the birds themselves should hear
Across this air, so sweet with lilies made,

Thy cheery notes ring out so fresh and clear,
While all their own are hushed till evening's shade,
They too would wonder from what song-bird rare
Came such a song, so sweet beyond compare.

JUNE, 1871.

WILLIAM HENRY FURNESS.

*Read at the Celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of his
Settlement in Philadelphia.*



STANDING upon the summit of thy years,
 Dear elder brother, what dost thou behold,
 Along the way thy tireless feet have come
 From that far day, when young and fresh
 and bold,
 Hearing a voice that called thee from on high,
 Thou answeredst quickly, "Father, here am I."

Fain would we see all that thine eyes behold ;
 And yet not all, for there is secret store
 Of joy and sorrow in each private heart,
 To which no stranger openeth the door.
 But thou canst speak of many things beside,
 While we a little space with thee abide.

Tell us of those who fifty years ago
 Started thee forth upon thy sacred quest,
 Who all have gone before thee, each alone,
 To seek and find the Islands of the Blest.
 To-day methinks that there as well as here
 Is kept all tenderly thy golden year.

Tell us, for thou didst know and love him well,
Of CHANNING's face, — of those dilating eyes
That seemed to catch, while he was with us here,
Glimpses of things beyond the upper skies.
Tell us of that weak voice, which was so strong
To cleave asunder every form of wrong.

Thou hast had good companions on thy way ;
GANNETT was with thee in his ardent prime,
And with thee still when outward feebleness
But made his spirit seem the more sublime,
Till, like another prophet, summoned higher,
He found, like him, a chariot of fire.

And that beloved disciple was thy friend,
Whose heart was blither than the name he bore,
Who yet could hide the tenderness of MAY,
And, bleaker than December, downward pour
The tempest of his wrath on slavery's lie,
And all that takes from man's humanity.

And thou hast walked with our Saint THEODORE,
Our warrior-saint, well-named the gift of God,
Whose manful hate of every hateful thing
Blossomed with pity, e'en as Aaron's rod,
And lips that cursed the priest and Pharisee
Gathered more honey than the wilding bee.

All these are gone, and SUMNER's heart beneath
Should make more pure the yet untainted snow ;
Our one great statesman of these latter days,
Happy wert thou his other side to know ;
To call him friend, whom ages yet unborn
Shall love tenfold for every breath of scorn.

All these are gone, but one is with us still,
So frail that half we deem she will not die,
But slow exhale her earthly part away,
And wear e'en here the vesture of the sky.
LUCRETIA, blessed among women she,
Dear friend of Truth, and Peace, and Liberty.

And one, whose form is as the Son of Man,
Has been with thee through all these busy years ;
Holden our eyes, and He to us has seemed
As one seen dimly through a mist of tears ;
But thou hast seen Him clearly face to face,
And told us of His sweetness and His grace.

Standing upon the summit of thy years,
Dear elder brother, thou canst see the day
When slavery's curse had sway in all the land,
And thou art here, and that has passed away.
We give thee joy that in its hour of pride
Thy voice and hand were on the weaker side.

But from thy clear and lofty eminence

Let not thine eyes be ever backward turned,
For thou canst see before as cannot we

Who have not yet thy point of vantage earned.
Tell us of what thou seest in the years
That look so strange, seen through our hopes and fears.

Nothing we know to shake thy steadfast mind ;

Nothing to quench thy heart with doubt or fear ;
But higher truth and holier love revealed,

And justice growing to man's heart more dear.
And everywhere beneath high heaven's cope,
A deeper trust, a larger, better hope.

There are some here that shall not taste of death

Till they have seen the kingdom come, with power.


O brave forerunner, wheresoe'er thou art,

Thou wilt be glad with us in that glad hour.
Farewell ! Until we somewhere meet again,
We know in whom we have believed. Amen.

JANUARY 12, 1875.



EZRA STILES GANNETT.

T eve there shall be light," the promise runs
In the dear volume that he loved so well ;
Ay, and for him the promise was fulfilled,
When rang for him the solemn vesper-bell.

His was no day of sweet, unsullied blue,
And bright, warm sunshine on the grass and flowers ;
But many a cloud of loss and grief and pain
Dropped its deep shadow on the fleeting hours.

Clear were his morning hours, and calm and bright ;
His sun shot up with splendid fiery beam ;
And men were glad and revelled in its light,
And leaped to welcome it from sleep and dream.

'Then came a cloud and overshadowed him,
And chilled him with a presage as of death ;
And never did it quite forsake his sky,
But sought him often with its eager breath.

For still, though hours were his serene and still,
And radiant hours of steady, glowing noon,
That cloud of pain was ever near to touch
With quivering sadness every brightest boon.

And as his afternoon drew on to eve
And still he lingered in the whitened field, —
The reapers were so few, till night should fall
Fain would his hand the heavy sickle wield, —

Darker it grew and darker o'er the land,
And he was forced to lay his sickle by ;
But did it brighten, then his hand was quick
To seize once more its opportunity.

So the day faded, and the evening came ;
Then from the sky the clouds were furled away,
And a great peace and beauty welcomed in
The evening star with her benignant ray.

And all the air was hushed and whispering,
And all the sky was purely, softly bright ;
And so the blessed promise was fulfilled :
“ At eve,” it said, — “ at eve there shall be light.”

But that fair evening did not end in night,
With shadows deep and darkness all forlorn ;
Just at its brightest he was snatched away
Into the golden palaces of morn.

And surely since the Master went that way,
To welcome there earth's holiest and best,
He has not welcomed one who loved him more
Than he who leaned that evening on his breast.

BALD-CAP REVISITED.



LEVEN years, and two fair months beside,
Full to the brim with various love and joy,
My life has known since last I drew apart
Into this huge sky-shouldering mountain dome,
And, listening, heard the winds among the pines
Making a music as of countless choirs,
Chanting in sweet and solemn unison ;
And, standing here where God's artificers,
Angels of frost and fire and sun and storm,
Have made a floor with nameless gems inlaid,
Saw, like a roof, the slopes of living green
Go cleaving down to meet the lower hills, —
Firm-buttressed walls, their bases over-grown
With meadow-sweet and ferns and tangled vines,
And all that makes the road-sides beautiful ;
While, all around me, other domes arose,
Girded with towers and eager pinnacles,
Into the silent and astonished air.
Full oft, since then, up-looking from below,
As naught to me has been the pleasantness
Of meadows broad, and, 'mid them, flowing wide
The Androscoggin's dark empurpled stream,

Enamoured of thine awful loveliness,
Thy draperies of forests overspread
With shadows and with silvery, shining mists,
Thy dark ravines and cloud-conversing top,
Where it would almost seem that one might hear
The talk of angels in the happy blue ;—
And so, in truth, my heart has heard to-day.

Dear sacred Mount, not thine alone the charm
By which thou dost so overmaster me,
But something in thy lover's beating heart,
Something of memories vague and fond and sweet,
Something of what he cannot be again,
Something of sharp regret for vanished joys,
And faces that he may no more behold,
And voices that he listens for in vain,
And feet whose welcome sound he hears no more,
And hands whose touch could make his being thrill
With love's dear rapture of delicious pain, —
Something of all the years that he has lived,
Of all the joy and sorrow he has known,
Since first with eager feet and heart aflame
He struggled up thy steep and shaggy sides,
Sun-flecked, leaf-shaded realms of life in death,
And stood, as now, upon thy topmost crest,
Trembling with joy and tender unto tears ;—
Something of all these things mingles with thee, —
Green of thy leaves and whiteness of thy clouds,

Rush of thy streams and rustle of thy pines, —
With all thy strength and all thy tenderness,
Till thou art loved not for thyself alone,
But for the love of many who are gone,
And most of all for one who still remains
To make all sights more fair, all sounds more sweet,
All life more dear and glad and wonderful.

Eleven years, and thou so little changed !
No change but what the changing season brings ;
For then, in June, thou wast all greenery ;
Now, in September, thou art turning sere,
Or hanging many a leafy banner out,
Blazoned with gold ; and 'mid the sombre rows
Of priest-like pines, along thy forest aisles,
Gleams here and there a red-cloaked cardinal ;
And old decay is covered everywhere
With the fresh-fallen leaves, making such show
As never caliph with his floors entiled
With warmest-hued and shapeliest arabesques.
Thou hast not changed. As it were yesterday
I stood upon thy moss-grown parapet,
Familiar seems each lightning-splintered crag,
Each slope that shimmers in the sunny wind,
Each outer court through which with crackling tread
I pressed into thy presence-chamber vast,
And dared to sit upon thy sculptured throne.
Still through the broad and grassy intervale

The river into which thy torrents run
Flows swiftly on, setting with amethyst
Full many a little emerald-tinted isle,
Past many a pebbly, drought-discovered shoal,
And over many a shallow, rippling ford,
For ever singing as it hurries by,
Impatient to be mingled with the sea.
And still on every side stand reaching up
Into the blue, illimitable air
Thy huge, sky-cleaving, cloud-compelling peers,
Baring their knotted bosoms to the sun.
Still, as of yore, the shadows troop adown
Their mighty slopes, or ever deeper grow
Amid the brawn of every dark ravine.
Thou art not changed ; the same from year to year
Are all thy great and dear companions.
There comes to thee no morn when thou dost miss
This one or that from his accustomed place,
And watch in vain for him to come again.
Would it were so with me ! But, as I gaze
Abroad upon thy stalwart brotherhood,
A dimness comes, which is not of the hills,
Between me and their everlastingness,
To think that since I hailed thy glory first
So many of *my* mates have gone away
Beyond the misty mountain-tops of death,
That well-nigh for each peak I count a grave.
Fades out the valley's peace, the purple glow

That now begins to bathe the distant hills,
And in their stead I see the faces strong
And sweet of dear ones whom I shall not meet again
Until I bid my last farewell to thee.

Dear, mighty friend, oh deem not that I chide
Aught thou hast done to make thyself appear
Spectral and dim, and with thee all thy kin,
And nothing real but those faces pure
That in the infinite space of heart and mind
Press cheek to cheek, so dense the angel-throng ;
As in the backgrounds Raphael loved to paint
For Mary and her wonder-gifted child :
No other service thou couldst render me
Would seem so tender and so good as this.
Yet were my heart ungrateful if alone
Of vanished joys I heard the solemn voice
Of all thy sounds and all thy silences
Soft-speaking, here, as hour succeeds to hour,
Each than the last more rare and mystical.
" Though much has gone," thou say'st, " since first I tried
Thy youthful strength with rigors all unknown,
How much remains ! How much is now thine own
Which then thou hadst no knowledge of or dream !
What joy of friends and books, and perfect days
When earth to heaven seemed nearer than its wont ;
What sacred hours of high companionship ;
What deeper love where love was rife before ;

What faces and what voices from the void,
Shaping themselves for you to bend and kiss,
Rounding themselves for you to list and hear ;
What deeper sense of all the mystery
In which you lie embosomed evermore !”

Thou sayest this? Nay, 'tis no voice of thine.
Not to remember either loss or gain
Do thy enchantments lure the hearts of men.
'Tis their device to use thy beetling crags
For rock-hewn stairs, by which they may ascend
To secret shrines of memory and prayer.
'Tis thine to make them lose themselves in thee ;
Ay, to forget their individual life,
And feel themselves but parts of that which breathes
With thy sweet-scented breath of trees that sway
And rustle in the wind ; of that which creeps
In every lichen's slow and noiseless tread,
Or warms thy heart with ardors of the sun.
Sleep, mind and heart, and let the body wake
And every sense with speechless rapture thrill.
Full soon, somehow, God's wondrous alchemy
The senses' joy shall turn to spirit's praise ;
Seeing that soul and sense are not at war,
But each the other's gentle servitor.
Drink deep, O sense, and there shall come a day
When heart and soul shall share thy freshening.
And for this perfect peace in which I lie,

Bathing myself in heaven's upper air,
Curtained with clouds, with carpets for my feet
Such as the proudest sultan could not buy
With all the hoarded wealth of centuries, —
For this I know, that when — no, not too soon —
Again I thread the city's crowded ways,
And mingle with its mighty swarm of men,
And bend myself to do the tasks I love,
I shall with stouter heart and firmer mind
Pursue my way ; sustained by greater hopes ;
Cheered by a deeper faith in all the world,
And a more loving trust, my God, in Thee.

SHELBURNE, N.H., Sept. 1876.



AULD LANG SYNE.



T singeth low in every heart,
 We hear it each and all, —
 A song of those who answer not,
 However we may call ;
 They throng the silence of the breast,
 We see them as of yore, —
 The kind, the brave, the true, the sweet,
 Who walk with us no more.

'Tis hard to take the burden up,
 When these have laid it down ;
 They brightened all the joy of life,
 They softened every frown ;
 But, oh, 'tis good to think of them,
 When we are troubled sore !
 Thanks be to God that such have been,
 Although they are no more !

More home-like seems the vast unknown,
 Since they have entered there ;

To follow them were not so hard,
Wherever they may fare ;
They cannot be where God is not,
On any sea or shore ;
Whate'er betides, Thy love abides,
Our God, for evermore.

APRIL, 1876.

